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ABSTRACT

A study of youth and the Youth Service in rural West Dorset (England) to determine what work and recreational opportunities are available, how youth view their adolescent years, and how the Youth Service is helping them adjust to adulthood, indicates that within the present system youth are afforded few considerations. Many become alienated. Many local adolescents have a low social status. Television and magazines give false impressions of the outside world. Because West Dorset is a tourist area, only seasonal employment demand for youth exists. Towns have enough organizations for adolescents, but the needs of older adolescents and children up to age 14 are not being met as well in the villages, because of distance and time involved in getting to available organizations. For a more meaningful Youth Service, there must be more personal contact with adolescents (face work), improvement in general communications (particularly an inter-agency team approach), and decentralization of current administrative/support systems. Implementation of these recommendations would increase the amount of youth work activity, especially in villages. More development of the Youth Service is necessary to bring about social and political changes which will benefit youth. Additionally, the whole rural problem for the United Kingdom needs attention. (CM)

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RURAL YOUTH. IMAGES FROM WEST DORSET

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BY

J. A. KENNEDY.

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A study of young people in a rural area and the extent of Youth Service provision afforded them.

RURAL YOUTH: Images from West Dorset

A study of young people in a rural area and the extent of Youth Service provision afforded them.

J. A. KENNEDY

JUNE 1981.

ABSTRACT

Rural youth: images from West Dorset. The following study is broken down into two main parts. The first part, incorporating Chapters One and Two, deals, in the main, with the day to day behaviour of some young people living in rural West Dorset. Chapter One describes the physical setting in which the action takes place and may be regarded as a sort of backdrop against which the "images of youth" have been painted. Chapter Two deals specifically with the young people and, to a certain extent, the social systems into which they must eventually integrate. The information used to write the text was gleaned from participant observation in the field and the general perspectives may be regarded as interactionist in nature. The overall thesis presented in this part is that there are, in West Dorset, a fair number of youngsters displaying subtle signs of social alienation and the latter part of Chapter Two constitutes an essay on alienation in the rural setting.

Part two of the study, that is Chapters Three and Four, considers the role of the youth service, both voluntary and statutory, and the extent of provision afforded young people in West Dorset. Various items relating to organisations and membership of the same are detailed, plus a number of other items such as spare time activities, part-time employment opportunities for young people, social habits and so on. I have also tried to describe how the youth service 'works' in the area and how certain problems reduce its overall effectiveness. Chapter Four deals specifically with how I feel the services to youth could be improved, particularly for those youngsters living in villages.

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INTRODUCTION

I remember meeting Mr. Forsey. It was one wet Wednesday evening in December 1976 and he had driven over to Bridport from Bettiscombe with his wife to attend an Area Youth Committee meeting. He was a man in his late fifties, possibly early sixties, and I remember feeling sympathetically surprised to hear that he was part-time voluntary leader-in-charge of Bettiscombe and Holditch Youth Club. As the evening wore on and general business matters drew to a close it became evident that Mr. Forsey was experiencing severe problems in maintaining his already restricted service to young people. His enthusiasm was rampant and his desire to work with youngsters in his area desperate, but his resources and the support offered him were practically nil. It was also obvious that there was nothing anyone at the meeting could do to alleviate his predicament, although everyone was naturally sympathetic towards him, and that ultimately he and his Youth Club were doomed to failure. Not because he himself was "getting on" in years but because the machinery which when activated might have thrown up the life-line he was searching for simply did not exist. There was no organised system or procedure for anyone to go through and Mr. Forsey's presence at the Area meeting was a last gasp shot in the dark; it failed. We sat and listened impotently to his problems and it was at that stage that I decided to attempt an appraisal of the rural situation as a whole but with particular emphasis on youth.

Over the next few weeks I began to give the subject some serious thought and a whole series of alternatives presented themselves before me. For a start, there was very little documented information concerning either the distribution or activities of existing voluntary organisations in the area and what information was available was either wildly out of date or in some cases totally inaccurate. A directory of information was needed and a comprehensive one at that. The old directory was nothing more than a "mish-mash" of random headings and I determined to publish an A - Z style document which would be indexed, cross-referenced in the text and generally informative above and beyond the standard "name and telephone number" type. It needed to contain information about organisations already functioning (local Scout Groups, Youth Clubs, Swimming Clubs, and so on) and details of National bodies (e.g. National Association of Youth Clubs, South Western Amateur Athletics Association) which can come in useful at any time. I also thought that simple details about (say) village halls - capacity, seating, charges, canteen facilities - should be included. Any information about premises is always interesting (and here I was thinking ahead) for convenient permanent sites are hard to come by but once obtained can become the backbone (although not the be all and end all) of a reasonable and worthwhile youth service. The construction of this directory seemed to me imperative. However, it was clear that by itself the document would serve little useful purpose and play only a minor role in the process of rejuvenating youth work in the area. It would in time prove to be a helpful aid in the development of youth work but as such could only be regarded as part of an overriding strategy for revival.

Now although there were many ideas floating around concerning youth work in rural towns and villages recommendations based on solid research were sadly lacking. For instance, many local workers thought the idea of taking a mobile art/drama workshop into rural villages would be a successful venture - after all we have mobile libraries and the Dorset Community Council's 'Blue Van' service was appreciated by lots of people in the rural areas - but no one had actually been into the villages and asked the local people if they would use it if provided. In other words, strategies based on local opinion were non-existent. This had to be remedied and I decided to ask as many people as possible (particularly young people) some very simple questions, such as: "If a mobile art/drama workshop was to visit your village would you use it?". I needed to carry out a survey and with this in mind set about constructing an appropriate questionnaire. I also thought it a reasonable idea to compare the results of the survey with information gleaned from both formal and informal interviews. This would help me answer the question, "How do the answers to formal questionnaires compare with the suggestions, ideas, feelings and so on found in the everyday conversations of young people living in the study area?". I also hoped that together with the results of the questionnaires an analysis of the interviews might go some way to helping me construct a picture of how young people not only lived their lives from day-to-day but also regarded themselves in relation to their peers, their parents, significant others and the world in general; and here I was presented with another alternative.

Numerous individuals have carried out studies of life in small communities. In the main these studies have concentrated on the social, cultural and economic activities of communities as a whole, given the information a certain historical perspective and been generally descriptive from a social-anthropological point of view. References to youth, however, tend to be scattered and descriptions of (say) conversations between young people or interesting incidents in their everyday lives are few and far between. Would it be possible to carry out an in-depth study of the youth of one particular community? This idea appealed to me immensely. I would be able to use participant - observation as a method (and I had used this method extensively when carrying out a study of people's behaviour on buses) and fit the final descriptions into a model based on the theoretical ideas of the Symbolic Interactionists, with whom I felt I had a certain affinity.(1) I would be able to concentrate on numerous topics of interest - child rearing practices in rural villages; effects of urban oriented mass media on children living in remote areas; the personal relationships and sexual activity of adolescents living in small communities; young people's conceptions of the world around them, the scope of their 'horizons' and the nature of their personal identification with village life. Over a period of time I would be able to build up an authoritative dossier which when presented as a whole would describe in some detail the day-to-day behaviour of young people living in the particular community chosen. This type of study would be invaluable when it came to developing strategies aimed at making richer the lives of everyone in the rural areas, for in the final analysis successful youth or community work depends upon dynamic meaningful interaction between people with common interest. A study using participant-observation offered me the best chance of reaching the 'heart' of the people and understanding intimately their whole way of life. Participating in the action also meant that I would be able to direct and change behaviour in concurrence with agreed policies. I would be able to plan programmes with the aid of "inside" information and, hopefully, with the help of local people themselves. Taking this particular line of action, however, meant that I would have to make a number of important assumptions. The data collected from a community study would only refer to one group of people (youngsters) in one place at one particular moment in time, and generalised strategies would be based on the assumption that (individual differences accepted) all young people in West Dorset villages are brought up in similar ways and that small communities function (socially, politically etc.) very much alike. I had to assume that strategies based on information concerning only one or perhaps two villages could be applied with validity "across the board" and as this conflicted with my better judgement I was not happy with the situation. But the ideal course of action, that of studying and thereby helping regularly individual villages was clearly unrealistic for neither I, nor anyone else in the County, could afford the amount of time needed to tackle the project efficiently. I concluded that this idea would have to be shelved and I was left with what I considered to be four main tasks:

1) The production of an A - Z directory containing as much information as possible about the current situation.

2) The carrying out of a survey using questionnaires backed up with -

3) - a series of both formal and informal interviews with young people and adults throughout the area.

4) The study of one particular community using participant-observation as a method and concentrating in the main on young people and their relationship to and position in the community as a whole. This would involve the implementation of considered strategies, for instance the setting up of a one night a week youth group. For practical reasons I discounted the idea of either studying or physically assisting groups in more than one village within the study area.

Eighteen months after the initial seed had been sown in my mind I was in a strong position to begin some serious research. I had in fact been working on the community study since March 1977, but for numerous reasons was having dreadful problems collecting any worthwhile data. Above all else the main problem was lack of time. Running a full time Youth & Community Centre, as I was, meant working mainly in the evenings or at weekends, the very time (indeed the only time) when I should have been carrying out observations in the village. I had decided to attempt a study of the youth population of Wootton Fitzpaine, the village having a number of interesting attractions from a sociological research point of view - declining population, disintegrating social life, no provision for youth, excessive complement of old people, reasonable number of young people making any considerations viable, and a desire on the part of one or two individuals to help start up some sort of youth work. In certain ways Wootton Fitzpaine was typical of other villages (in many cases it was worse off) and I was working on the theory that if I could generate activity here then for sure I could generate activity elsewhere. Places like Whitchurch Canonicorum and Burton Bradstock would be no problem, they were almost begging for assistance, but Wootton Fitzpaine was experiencing severe decline and from that point of view presented a greater challenge. By the spring of 1978 I had made some good contacts and other inroads as well, but it was obvious that I would never be able to do justice to the research project and decided to change direction and concentrate on the survey, interviews and production of the directory, projects which were taking up a good deal of my time anyway.

This report documents for better or worse the major findings of my research. It is not the full-blooded community study I originally aimed for but it does, hopefully, give the reader some insight into the social organisations and interactions which exist and punctuate life in West Dorset villages. Mainly I have attempted to describe how young people in particular construct some sort of social reality within the rural frameworks which bound and schedule their behaviour in everyday life.

Chapter One is primarily descriptive. In it I attempt to paint a general scene, a backdrop, against which the actors (in this case the inhabitants of West Dorset) play out their parts. In essence I am talking about the settings, the key frameworks (demographic, geographic, economic, historical, educational, social) within which people must necessarily function. I have, however, by no stretch of the imagination offered an in-depth analysis of those frameworks, those boundaries, rather I have preferred to give the reader a simple 'feel' of West Dorset and a reading should be approached as would say a short guided tour of some major city or place of interest - one takes in the landmarks first.

Chapter Two is also descriptive but the images have more detail, more texture. It may be considered the core of the study. Chapter Three is about provision for young people. In it I outline an information gathering project, 'OPERATION CONTACT', and give an analysis of 1024 questionnaires designed to find out the social habits of adolescents.

To offer images of youth has been my main aim. The reader should come upon characters and incidents which not only stand out against the backdrop mentioned earlier but positively burn themselves into the minds eye. The study should also provide the reader with a fair knowledge of how both Local Authority institutions and voluntary organisations function and interact and of how the current situation limits the creation and support of effective community groups. Above all else I have tried to describe the realities of living in villages as seen through the eyes of young people. This task has not been easy, in the final analysis it may not even have been successful.

The conclusions are generally prescriptive, some might say idealistically impractical, romantic even. Nevertheless, I believe that all strategies based on research, understanding, knowledge and sometimes hunches should be pooled for consideration. It is a social policy document advocating small but significant social change.

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(1) Symbolic Interaction - From Secord & Backman (1974):
"Symbolic interactionism, descending from George Herbert Mead, emphasizes the reflexive nature of human interaction - that individuals make indications to themselves about their own actions and those of other persons. These indications are typically linguistic representations which give meaning to human acts. Action is seen as a process of coping with the world instead of reacting to it on the basis of some preexisting psychological structure. As Herbert Blumer puts it,

> 'In order to act the individual has to identify what he wants, establish an objective or goal, map out a prospective line of behaviour, note and interpret the actions of others, size up his situation, check himself at this or that point, figure out what to do at other points, and frequently spur himself on in the face of dragging dispositions or discouraging settings.'

In short, the symbolic interactionists emphasize the individual's status as an active agent in the process of constructing his actions as he goes along. Typically, they eschew the experimental method in favor of a procedure called participant observation. This method is most often used to study phenomena that cannot be approached by way of an experiment: A traditional investigative approach would destroy or badly distort the phenomena. Further, such phenomena often cannot be studied in retrospect by such means as interviewing. In participant observation, the observer participates actively in the lives of the people he is observing."

From Denzin (1969):
"An interactionist assumes that a complete and meaningful analysis of human conduct will capture the symbolic meanings that emerge over time in interaction. The behaviorism of Mead directs us to link symbols with interaction - hence the term symbolic interaction. The variety of these symbols are manifold and complex, ranging from the verbal to the non-verbal and from the intended to the unintended. The verbal utterance, the non-verbal gesture, the mode of dress, and the style of speech all provide clues to the symbolic meanings that become translated into and emerge out of interaction.

CHAPTER ONE

PART I

THE SETTING

(I) THE AREA: POSITION AND SIZE

The area with which I am concerned and within which the study was carried out may be located in the county of Dorset. Furthermore, it is to the far west of the county that the reader's attention must be drawn and in particular to the towns and villages within the rural districts of Bridport and Beaminster. The holiday resort of Lyme Regis, a fairly autonomous parish, is also included. From henceforth this study area will be referred to as West Dorset and is shown in Map I. Dotted throughout the area, which takes in approximately 150 square miles of natural beauty, are some forty-three small parishes and three towns. Reference will, of course, be made to many of these places throughout this study, but at this stage it will be sufficient to draw the reader's attention to some basic information regarding population.

(II) A POPULATION GUIDE

The latest county council estimates are for 1975 and show the population of the West Dorset area to be standing at 26812 with the three main towns of BRIDPORT (6369), Lyme Regis (3403) and Beaminster (2345) accounting for just under fifty per cent of the total. Individual village populations may be noted from the following table.

I will be discussing some of the more interesting aspects concerning demographic trends shortly, however, an indication now of the number of young people residing in West Dorset might prepare the reader for the forthcoming debate, it is after all this group with which I am primarily concerned.

TABLE 1: PARISH POPULATIONS

BRIDPORT TOWN	6,369	BEAMINSTER TOWN	2,345
Bradpole	1,405	Broadwindsor	1,024
Bothenhampton	1,312	Netherbury	988
Charmouth	1,016	Thorncombe	655
Symondsbury	900	Powerstock	377
Burton Bradstock	803	Halstock	345
Whitchurch Canonicorum	673	Corscombe	310
Chideock	553	Mosterton	222
Loders	397	Evershot	219
Puncknowle	392	Stoke Abbott	211
Marshwood	303	Melbury Osmond	184
Wootton Fitzpaine	283	South Perrott	166
Shipton Gorge	266	Rampisham	151
Allington	205	Hooke	129
Litton Cheney	185	Burstock	100
Askerswell	132	Chedington	97
Stanton St. Gabriel	78	Bettiscombe	77
Swyre	74	East Chelborough	70
Catherston Leweston	60	Seaborough	58
Chilbombe	21	Wraxell	57
		Pilsdon	50
		Melbury Sampford	44
		Mapperton	34
		West Chelborough	43
LYME REGIS	3,403	North Poorton	26
		TOTAL POPULATION	26,812

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 20 YEARS

TOWN/VILLAGE	TOTAL POP.	0 - 14	15 - 19	TOTAL under 20
BRIDPORT	6,369	1,117	358	1,475
LYME REGIS	3,403	548	187	735
BEAMINSTER	2,345	496	164	660
Bradpole	1,405	312	106	418
Bothenhampton	1,312	200	31	231
Broadwindsor	1,024	187	64	251
Charmouth	1,016	161	49	210
Netherbury	988	192	61	253
Symondsbury	900	157	51	208
Burton Bradstock	803	106	35	141
Whitchurch Canonicorum	673	99	40	139
Thorncombe	655	169	49	218
Chideock	553	89	29	118
Loders	397	88	21	109
Puncknowle	392	73	9	82
Powerstock	377	67	21	88
Halstock	345	67	24	91
Corscombe	310	66	22	88
Marshwood	303	61	19	80
Wootton Fitzpaine	283	67	26	93
Shipton Gorge	266	35	12	47
Mosterton	222	55	11	66
Evershot	219	46	12	58
Stoke Abbott	211	41	17	58
Allington	205	39	11	50
Litton Cheney	185	39	6	45
Melbury Osmond	184	37	13	50
South Perrott	166	39	11	50
Rampisham	151	44	5	49
Askerswell	132	35	6	41
Hooke	129			
Burstock	100	28	6	34
Chedington	97	26	4	30
Stanton St. Gabriel	78	13	3	16
Bettiscombe	77	22	6	28
Swyre	74	7	9	16
East Chelborough	70	20	6	26
Catherston Leweston	60	3	-	3
Seaborough	58	16	8	24
Wraxall	57	9	6	15
Pilsdon	50	9	2	11
Melbury Sampford	44	8	7	15
West Chelborough	43	11	4	15
Mapperton	34	13	3	16
North Poorton	26	8	3	11
Chilcombe	21	5	-	5
TOTALS:	26812	4930	1537	6467

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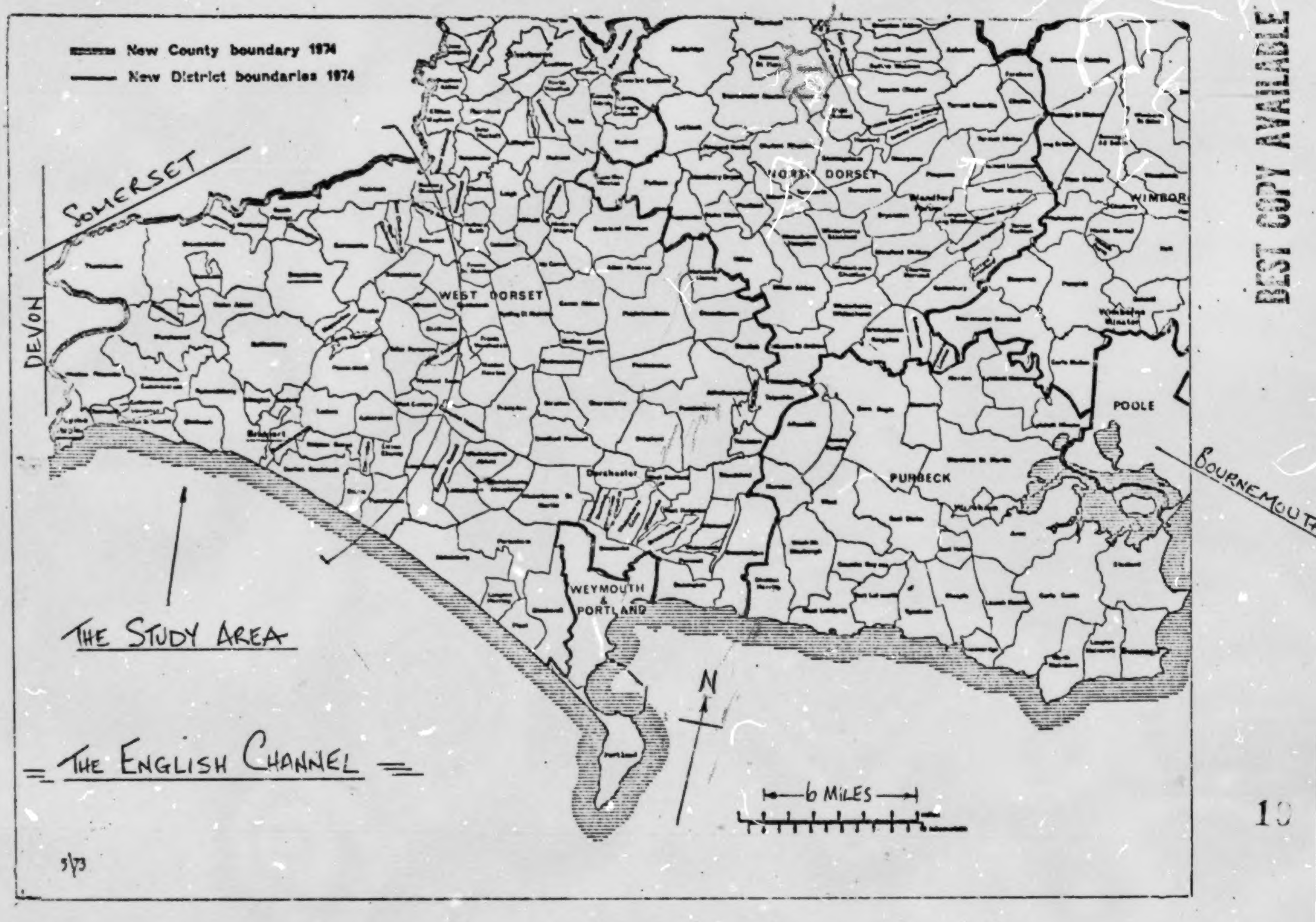
New County boundary 1974
New District boundaries 1974
SOMERSET
DEVON
WEST DORSET
NORTH DORSET
WIMBOR
POOLE
BOURNEMOUT
PURBECK
WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND
Dorchester
Bridport
Wimborne Minster
THE STUDY AREA
THE ENGLISH CHANNEL
N
6 MILES
5/73

Map 1: West Dorset

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The absence from Table 2 of the village of Hooke can be explained by the fact that virtually all the youth population is made up of boys who attend the St. Francis School for Boys, this being a special school catering for problem children. Boys who cannot be coped with by their own authorities are transported into the depths of Dorset in the hope that a spell away from the inner cities might prove beneficial. Whether this is or is not the case is of no consequence. However, one fact of the matter is that these boys are, as it were, confined to barracks and very rarely (and then only under strict supervision) enter into any community activities. For this reason I have excluded them from the count. Thus, to briefly summarise, the estimated population of West Dorset in 1975 was 26,812 of which just under twenty-five per cent were below the age of twenty. Of these young people over forty-five per cent lived in the three main towns, the remainder being scattered throughout the villages.

(III) A SIMPLE GEOGRAPHY: THE MARSHWOOD VALE TO EGGERDON

Much of West Dorset is dominated by a belt of green fertility known as the Marshwood Vale. The Vale is clearly visible from many points of vantage but positively glorified when viewed from the north where a high peak known as Pilsdon Pen provides the perfect plateau. The panoramas witnessed from both the south (particularly from the heights of Chideock hill) and west (notably a mile or so up from the Monkton Wyld turn off along the B3165 road) also bless the spectator with lasting memories. The western view across Charmouth forest, the vale, and on towards the sea is quite enchanting. Finally, from the east the peaks of Denhay and the more northerly Lewesdon offer views second only to Pilsdon for sheer graphic presentation. At just over nine hundred feet above sea level, Pilsdon Pen has the distinction of being the highest peak in Dorset. From here one may cast one's eyes over three counties, Somerset, Devon and Dorset and also have the opportunity of gazing at a good stretch of the English Channel, which is to the south. There is much evidence to suggest that there were once ancient settlements on or around the hill and the prevalence of empty beer cans, discarded cigarette packets and small notices asking people to take their litter home provides ample proof that nowadays the area is a popular spot with summer picnickers.

Winter renders it a desolate place. The approach to the summit is barren, boasting no more vegetation than coarse grass, a few wild brambles and a thick gorse which serves as shelter for the foxes and rabbits. Rough tracks have been hacked through the gorse and these help to make the short and uneventful climb up from the main road a simple task.

However, on reaching the summit the exposed landscape below glows with richness and colour and life - albeit a still life. For on looking down from the peak one becomes increasingly aware of a deep silence surrounding the hill and a strange narcotic stillness seems to have been injected into the land.

One also has the rare and privileged distinction of actually being higher than the birds and always there is the river, the Char, which winds its way tentatively through the vale and seems to almost give up just before bursting into the sea at Charmouth.

Yet all around the signs of agricultural activity are in abundance. Sheep and cattle range over the steep slopes; thick haystacks covered with black plastic for protection are dotted in strategic places; equipment and machinery stand ready for use and somewhere out there, hidden by the hills, are the farms and villages of the vale. To see them clearly, however, one must leave the peak and enter a fierce irregular network of main roads, minor roads, dirt paths, cow tracks, disused paths and bridleways. All link up to form a mesh of local highways which to the stranger can prove to be a veritable nightmare.

Invariably these narrow country lanes are embedded in the land. They are usually banked on either side by thick, high hedgerows which overhang and make any worthwhile vision impossible. Hence, walking or driving along the lanes is a continuous source of surprise. Herds of cattle are frequently met as they are prodded to the sheds for milking; tractors lurch out of concealed openings; cyclists appear from apparently nowhere; farm workers and woodcutters amble amiably along and on warm summer evenings or at weekends local riding schools out on jolly hacks may present the country traveller with a considerable amount of equine trouble.

Above all else, however, travelling through the vale (and indeed West Dorset in general) is subject to satisfactory conditions in the weather. In spring or summer few problems present themselves, but in winter the weather can create situations which at best can only be described as desperate. Roads are flooded easily and high winds will ravage through the vale leaving narrow lanes littered with debris. Even light fog can render the vale impenetrable and the heavy snows of 1978 and 1979 brought about total standstills. There are, of course, no street lights to guide one through the vale and when evening comes upon it, save for the light from the odd farmhouse, only blackness prevails. Ferocious weather can, without doubt, bring major towns and cities to a halt, there is nothing new in that. The point about bad weather in the vale is that it need not be ferocious or exceptional in any way before it starts to have serious effects on life in general. The way in which the seasons can manipulate the lives of young people living in the villages will be dealt with later, for the time being it is enough to say that unless they have transport, there are times when they become, as it were, totally marooned in their homes.

If the Marshwood Vale dominates the west of our study area, then for sure the famous Eggerdon Hill overpowers the eastern half. Rising northwards from the tiny village of Askerswell and on beyond the isolated Spyway Inn, the hill is at the centre of a sweeping, barren heath immortalised as 'Egdon Heath' by Thomas Hardy in many of his novels. The heath is not and as likely never was the huge, wild moor that Hardy depicted, but it is truly an awesome stretch of natural terrain. Open, bare, desolate, it stands in stark contrast to the richness of the Vale and over the years has been the setting for many a weird tale. The hill itself is a forbidding spectacle and it is not surprising that the Romans situated a fort around it. From its summit the views are vast and penetrating and like some gigantic bird of prey it seems to hover over the countryside threatening all with its eternal power. I use the word eternal quite deliberately for the whole of the area, Vale and all, appear to exist in some sort of timeless zone. Examples of this quality, this apparent timelessness, are in abundance, particularly in the villages (and to a certain extent the towns also) which are positively steeped in it.

But to refer to the area as timeless belies the truth, for changes have quite clearly taken place and what was once a state of affairs (and I refer specifically to what might justifiably be known as the rural way of life) is no longer the case. A general decline is seemingly in motion and the peculiarities of rural life - commitment to the land, small social fields, kinship ties and so on - are evidently being eroded away. A fuller discussion concerning this erosion will follow later, at this stage I merely wish to point out that although many factors have facilitated this disintegration, an inability within the common man to come to terms with his own future and an almost fanatical dependence on things familiar have allowed the malignancy of decline to fester. People have moved away from the villages because of their inability to construct alternative forms of social and economic life out of the debris of an age long gone. Lack of employment (although important) has not been the only reason for this exodus and this I hope to make clear during the course of the study.

(IV) ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

As already mentioned, the area, particularly the coastal stretch, relies heavily on tourism to boost its economy and the local shopkeepers, hoteliers, publicans and local craftsmen would be hard pressed to survive without the annual influx. But West Dorset as a whole is mainly an agricultural area and the inhabitants of the village communities have (in the past at any rate) made their living out of farming. Of course this is not the case today. In 1975 only 15% of the workforce were involved in agriculture and farming as a career is regarded by many young people as something of a non-starter, even though the majority of youngsters in the area have a strong affinity with the land and the countryside in general. In fact it is difficult for any young person (especially those living in the villages) to avoid helping out on the farm at sometime or other, and it would not be rash of me to say that at least 90% of the children who came into the youth centre in Bridport spent some of their time on the farm. However, obtaining full time work or a good apprenticeship is not easy. When vacancies do arise the problem of travelling to and from the farm can make a job an unattractive proposition and often the idea of 'living in' has to be considered and that can cause a whole series of problems. In a way, farming for one's living is becoming a sort of vocation and as such only those youngsters with the necessary physical and moral qualities will survive the early years, or the later years for that matter.

There are no large industrial sites in the area and what light industry there is is situated mainly around the St.Michaels Trading estate in Bridport. There are a number of small factories in Lyme Regis and Beaminster, but most of the 22% of the workforce employed in the manufacturing industry work in Bridport. There are, however, quite a number of persons living in the area who travel fairly long distances to work, notably to Dorchester (County Hall employs quite a number of Bridport people) and Yeovil where the R.A.F. Yeovilton is a major employer.

Possibly the most famous employer in Bridport is the firm of Bridport-Gundry. They make nets, mainly, but also produce rope, twine, string and a host of 'odds-and-ends' for the market garden trade. Rope making has gone on in the town for over 750 years and the historical influence of Gundrys and the rope trade in general is clearly visible today. The Youth Centre's address is Gundry Lane and just around the corner we have Rope Walks; Gundrys own substantial land-holdings in or around the town; John Gundry, a director, is the area's representative for the Dorset Association of Youth Clubs; Anthony Sanctuary, the Company Secretary, is Chairman of the Youth Centre's Management Committee and Chairman of the Dorset Youth Advisory Panel. Gundrys are the area's major employer of labour and their influence is undeniable. But in the industries generally opportunities for career minded youngsters are few and far between, most school leavers making do with whatever they can get. It must be realised, however, that West Dorset is not a place to work in as such, rather, it is a place to live in. Thus many young people put up with third rate work in order to live in a first rate place, as do adults also, many people giving up lucrative occupations in highly competitive industrial areas in order to move to Bridport (and the West Country in general for that matter) in order to establish for themselves alternative forms of economic and social life styles. Planning policy is to expand the small industrial estates, particularly around the St.Michaels area, so maybe more attractive and meaningful opportunities will present themselves over the next few years.

Of the remaining 63% only 8% are employed in construction work, the remainder (55%), and an overwhelming majority, being accounted for by the service industry. Tourism boosts employment opportunities in the summer, but those (particularly youngsters) who fail to obtain a full time appointment (as opposed to a job temporary for the summer only) must reconsider their position come winter. I will be dealing with employment opportunities for young people later, but as a general observation it is reasonable to say that unemployment amongst young people is not yet the tragic problem it can be in other parts of the country; in the words of one old gentleman, "They always seem to find something." The list of major employers (see Appendix A) does not include the deluge of one-man businesses which abound, or the smaller hotels and guest houses, of which there are many.

(V) TRANSPORT

As far as public transport is concerned services in the area are poor. Some of the villages are not serviced at all and those that are are subject to limited schedules only. For instance, there is a bus from Wootton Fitzpaine to Bridport and back once a week only - to take advantage of the Wednesday market - and apart from the odd bus after 21.00 hours (mainly in the summer) there are positively no services at a later hour anywhere. As bad as it is, the position would be even worse but for the intervention of private companies but not even their additional help can really satisfy the area's needs. People must have their own transport although 'flying' visits to (say) Bridport or Yeovil can be expensive and time consuming. Of course the mobility of young people in the evening is severely restricted, even those from Bradpole (1½ miles from Bridport) must contemplate the possibility of having to make their return journey from Bridport on foot, or bicycle, or motorcycle, or hope for a 'lift', or call a taxi-cab, and quite naturally they, as well as those youngsters in the villages, think twice about such journeys. The multiple effects of poor transport systems will be discussed in Chapter Two. There is (as a final note) no railway system in the area.

(VI) DEPOPULATION AND RURAL DECLINE

If depopulation is a symptom of rural decline, then West Dorset (like many other rural areas in Great Britain) is in some trouble. With the area being one of extreme natural beauty many older people choose to retire in West Dorset and hence depopulation, overall, is not as extreme as in other parts of the country. But there does exist what I would consider to be an unhealthy imbalance in terms of age distribution and the migrational habits of people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four is certainly a cause for concern. For instance; when we look at the census figures for 1961 we find that young people between ten and fourteen and residing in the Rural District of Bridport numbered 590 (300 girls and 290 boys). Ten years later the twenty to twenty-four year old age group numbered only 470 (225 boys and 245 girls). Hence, in the decade up to 1971 the area had lost just over 2[illegible] of its most potent group of people. The same with the Rural District of Beaminster. In 1961 this particular area had 729 youngsters (408 boys and 321 girls) aged between ten and fourteen. Again the next ten years saw an area experience a fall, the number of twenty to twenty-four year olds in 1971 coming to only 450 (250 boys and 200 girls). This situation, the outward migration of young people from the villages, together with the influx of retired people has produced the imbalance mentioned earlier. Many of the villages are closed disintegrating social systems and will eventually destruct completely.

The "Incidence of Depopulation" and "Age Distribution" charts (see Appendix) speak for themselves and the reasons for rural depopulation are fairly well documented. In this respect West Dorset is typical of other rural areas - mechanisation on the farm; the disappearance of rural craftsmen unable to compete with modern day production methods; centralisation of education and the effects of village school closures; influence of urban-oriented mass media, particularly on young people; the economic and social attractiveness of the urban areas generally. Of all these factors employment is possibly the most influential and certainly declining employment opportunities in the countryside have played a major role in causing rural depopulation. But the process of rural decline is not easy to reverse, it is not just a matter of encouraging industrial growth. A study by Peter D'Abbs (1975) clearly shows that attempts to reduce the outward migration of young people must take into consideration not only the need to stimulate industrial development and create more jobs, but also the need for a balanced growth of social, cultural and other facilities. Young couples, not just school leavers, must be considered (with particular reference to housing) and, above all, policies must be geared to the local environment as a totality, not to one aspect of that environment. The stimulation of community life is, in my opinion, as important as the stimulation of employment opportunities.

Because of the scenic beauty of the area and its tranquillity there is a heavy demand for housing from retired people and the wealthier families seeking holiday homes. Naturally these people can offer the best prices and local people, natives of the land, find it difficult (if not impossible) to compete. As council housing is very limited, young people are hard pressed to obtain property, especially in the villages, and they are forced to look outside the area for a home. Also, it is awkward to attract industry if there is no housing available for workers and industrial development plans on any scale cause conflict between the indigenous local population who might welcome new employment opportunities and the wealthier folk who move into the villages and wish to retain the tranquil, primitive image of their rural retreat.

Thus, in some ways, a vicious circle is set up by the depopulation process. With less people living in the villages to support them, and with increased numbers of wealthier residents with private transport, village services decline. The standing conference of Rural Community Councils found in a study completed in 1978 that in the West Country 75% of the villages had no schools, 50% no sub-post offices and 30% had lost their village stores. With the loss of such services and the poor public transport system, the problem of maintaining a well-balanced village community becomes severe. Car ownership becomes essential and in the case of housewives whose husbands do not work locally, a second form of transport becomes desirable. Small parishes become dominated by the wealthy or retired and local youngsters may find themselves unable to continue living in the village in which they were born and bred. Apart from there being a disproportionate number of old people in the area, there is evidence to suggest that a polarisation of the economic classes is in process and generally speaking life for young people can become stifling in rural villages where kinship patterns and hierarchical structures place them in a position of low status. Their needs become ignored, they can become taken for granted as people and, in some villages, considerations afforded them are non-existent. Decisions regarding social and recreational facilities in villages are made largely by older residents and once again it is the teenagers who are likely to miss out. When the various factors are brought together (depopulation, imbalance in the age structure, lack of employment, no housing, little oppòrtunity to voice their opinions) a dangerous situation arises with young people failing to identify with village life and hence looking elsewhere to satisfy themselves emotionally, socially and economically. Halting depopulation and restoring social balance are key issues when it comes to considering rural revival as a whole. My main argument in this thesis is that a considered development of the youth service has an important role to play in any future revival.

(VII) EDUCATION: THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

On the edge of Dartmoor, about two miles north of Bovey Tracey, stands the small rural village of Hennock. The children of Hennock are lucky in that they are able to attend their own village school. The school also services children from Teign Village, an even smaller village situated in a deep valley about a mile down from Hennock; the children of Teign Village are also lucky. Just inside the main doorway of the school a large sign is pinned to the wall and anyone entering is forced to read it: TAKE AWAY THE SCHOOL AND YOU TAKE AWAY THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE. Emotive and not very original the words seem to throw out a sort of moral challenge rather than amounting to a statement of fact. After all, it seems hardly the function of a school to work as the 'heart' of any village. "Village schools exist only to provide education for village children."(1) Nevertheless, for the people of Hennock in Devon (and considerably more in West Dorset) their school is the heart of their village.

In West Dorset there are three comprehensive schools: Colfox School at Bridport, Beaminster School and Woodroffe School at Lyme Regis. Obviously these schools attract not only children living in the towns but those in the appropriate rural district also. A very small number of children travel outside their immediate rural district to attend school; for instance, I know half a dozen youngsters who travel to Lyme Regis from Bridport. The 'political' and educational reasons for this are quite interesting but hardly worth considering here. There are one or two private schools in the area, or at least within striking distance, and a number of special schools, for example the one at Hooke which I mentioned earlier, and a school for physically handicapped children in Bridport. However, we can safely say that the overwhelming majority of young people over the age of eleven attend one of the three comprehensive schools provided by the Local Education Authority.

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(1) The Village School: Bob Greenwell, "The Village Green". Spring 1981.

Briefly: all three schools offer a conventional secondary education in the formal sense, including sixth form 'A' level work. However, not everything can be accomplished during school hours. Education, in the broadest sense, is far from being a 'nine to three forty-five' affair. Extra curricula activities and the social life of the school are, for many young people, as important as formal lessons; and schools are exceptionally well equipped to cope with all aspects of both formal and informal education - premises, general facilities, equipment and expertise. For many young people living in villages, taking part in extra curricula activities or attending a social function often means special planning and organisation on the part of the whole family, particularly in winter.

Fifteen year old girl from Puncknowle:
"There's not much going on in Puncknowle, no discos or anything like that, so I try and get to the sixth form discos - usually about once a term. My mum usually comes and picks me up but you feel a bit of a fool saying, 'I'll have to go now, my mum's waiting outside for me', just when you're in the middle of a dance or something ....".

Twelve year old boy from Symondsbury:
"It's not too bad in summer. I can cycle into Bridport and that means I can stay for cricket or athletics or just play with my friends. In winter it gets dark soon so I've got to be home early. If mum or dad drive me I can get into Bridport at weekends to play with friends. It depends on the weather ....".

Fourteen year old boy, living in Thorncombe:
"Sometimes I'd really like to stay on after school but I've no chance, not in the winter anyway. I join in as many lunchtime activities as I can. That's the best part of school, the lunchtime clubs ....".

Fourteen year old girl from Litton Cheney:
"I'm in lots of clubs at school. But for the school I don't think I'd do anything. There's nothing for my age in the village. It's alright for the old folks, but not for my age.......".

There is little anyone can do at the moment to help young people who for one reason or another are unable to participate more fully in school life. Special transport or alternative school hours might be effective, but these are for the future. To compensate these youngsters NOW, initiatives within the villages hold the best chance of filling certain gaps in the social and cultural education of secondary school children. The youth service is capable of taking such initiatives. Villages with primary schools have an advantage, if only in terms of heated premises, over less fortunate settlements.

To a certain extent village schools have entered the front line "in the battle to save rural life".(1) In times of economic cutbacks small village schools are an obvious target as far as Central Government is concerned. West Dorset has lost a number of village schools over the past fifteen years or so: Wootton Fitzpaine, Whitchurch Canonicorum, Askerswell, Long Bredy, Drimpton, Netherbury, Chideock, Rampisham, Corscombe. Schools given a twenty year 'breather', until 1996, include Charmouth (which serves both Wootton and Whitchurch), Symondsbury, Loders, Marshwood, Litton Cheney, Broadwindsor, Thorncombe, Mosterton and Evershot.(2) However, in view of the Government's current strategy, who can tell what might happen next year or the year after? If families move away to find employment, the 'axe' could fall soon. Devon County Council, to their eternal credit, have made a brave declaration: NO MORE VILLAGE SCHOOL CLOSURES. It is hoped they will be allowed to keep their promise and that Dorset will follow a similar line.

There can be little doubt that in terms of community initiatives and the furtherance of rural life the village school has a vital part to play:

> "... it depends very much on the attitude of the teachers. Some like to live in the village and take a full and active part in its life ..... a quick survey around my own village finds staff involved in a whole host of activities which help to keep it alive."(3)

A few months ago a woman from Hennock told me of how the latest headmistress there had 'transformed' the school, and the local community at the same time:

> "Before Mrs.Samson came 'ere the staff didn't really care about teachin'; they was always comin' late or in the pub till two o'clock an' after. Now things is different. Everybody, mums an' dads too, really gets involved. Dances, trips, bar-b-ques. She's (the headmistress) even got a little youth club goin' in the evenings."

The former headmaster of Symondsbury school in West Dorset, John Tallon, would often drool over the benefits of village schools:

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(1) The Village School: Bob Greenwell, "The Village Green". Spring 1981.
(2) Community Council of Dorset (from the Dorset Structure Plan).
(3) Bob Greenwell, ibid.

> "They're a dream of a place to work in. Not much in terms of promotion, but a hell of a lot in terms of job satisfaction. It's much more than a school - it's almost like a family business. Everyone is so friendly. Parents wander in and out - no problems in a village school."

> "The village school has its own atmosphere too. It is relaxed and unforced, and the small numbers make it easier to make allowances for individual differences. Problems like fighting and bullying are almost unknown."(1)

Like any educational establishment the small village school has both advantages and disadvantages. However, the thoughts of having to travel ten miles or so to a larger primary school are not relished by both parents and pupils. The school may lack the 'specialist' teacher or masses of equipment, but its intimacy, caring attitude and general involvement in the life of a small community far outweigh the lack of money. From a youth worker's point of view, the village school may be regarded as a key area of contact and its position within a small community should never be overlooked.

THE SETTING: A SUMMARY

Having given the reader a brief insight into some of the 'key frameworks' which bound everyday interaction in West Dorset, it is now perhaps time to consider some of the villages and towns in more detail. Important points worth recalling might well be:

Area: Known as West Dorset. Three main towns and forty three small villages.

Population: Approximately 27,000. Some villages are experiencing serious depopulation, others including the towns are growing. Numbers of older/retired people WELL ABOVE national average.

Geography: An area of outstanding natural beauty. English Channel to the south, vales and hills all around. The area is on the borders of both Devon and Somerset.

Transport: Poor public transport. No railways. Private transport (of any sort) almost essential for villagers.

Economy and Employment: The area depends heavily on tourism, some light industry in Bridport and Beaminster. Craftsmen on the wain. Lots of summer work and a deluge of self employed/small businesses. Only 15% of the working population are involved in agriculture.

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(1) Bob Greenwell, ibid.

Housing: Generally expensive, very expensive. Council building programmes need boosting. Very difficult for young people in villages to buy their own home. A local housing policy is needed urgently.

Education: Three comprehensive schools. Many children have to travel. Some villages still have primary schools but some of these are under threat of closure. The village school may be regarded as the 'heart' of the village.

General Note: Some villages are in a state of rapid decline, others seem to be prospering and the towns also seem to be doing well. It would be wrong to assume though that general rural recovery has begun. Things are merely changing, for better or worse, depending where you live, or whether you have a job, or a car, or whether you are wealthy or poor, or young or old.

PART II

FOUR VILLAGES AND THREE TOWNS

As mentioned earlier, within the study area there are three main towns and some forty three villages. At this stage let me offer brief descriptions of four villages (Symondsbury, Wootton Fitzpaine, Whitchurch Canonicorum and Charmouth) and the three towns. Individual differences accepted, the small villages may well be regarded as representative of certain types of parish and the main towns warrant a note if only for the fact that they account for just under half the area's population. They are also completely different from each other.

Lyme Regis for example is renowned for its excessive complement of old people, a state of affairs which has led to the area (along with Bournemouth and other places along the south coast) being termed the Costa Geriatrica. It is also a town with two tales to tell - one for the summer, when it is overrun by holiday makers, and one for the winter, when it slips into some sort of deep hibernation. The same might be said of Bridport, although generally speaking Bridport is a far busier place altogether. Beaminster deserves a mention because it has retained the qualities of old Dorset (more so than either Lyme or Bridport) whilst at the same time undergoing definite changes. Over the years small housing estates have sprung up and one of the area's three comprehensive schools is based there. But Beaminster, suspended in a rural trance, drifts regardlessly on and defies anyone to wake it up. Of these towns I will speak more later, first let me consider the smaller parishes.

(a) SYMONDSBURY

Symondsbury lies about two miles north-west of Bridport and is representative (I use the word somewhat reservedly) of the larger village communities such as Netherbury, Burton Bradstock and Broadwindsor. Unlike many smaller parishes Symondsbury has managed to cling on to its primary school, shop and village pub. The old Manor, an early seventeenth century building, is nowadays a private College offering high-priced education and attended, in the main, by foreign students from wealthy families. The church is old (a building has stood on the site since Saxon times) and stands in the centre of what is an extremely quiet and compact village. All in all, with its sixteenth century cob cottages and thatched roofs everywhere the place is quite idyllic and because it lies in a hidden valley a mile or so off the main A35 road it tends to miss much of the summer hullabaloo, unlike Burton Bradstock which attracts thousands of tourists throughout the holiday season. This is why I used the word 'representative' with reservations earlier. Indeed with its gorgeous beaches and caravan sites Burton Bradstock is becoming more and more commercialised every year, whereas Symondsbury remains securely anchored to its rural traditions; summer fetes, dances in the manor, friendly meetings in the village hall, cider drinking in the fields on warm summer evenings, casual chatter in the lanes and, of course strong reliance on the land. One important feature which has helped Symondsbury move gently through the twentieth century has, in my opinion, been the constant presence of the

Colfox family. The name Colfox is virtually synonymous with Symondsbury and the family's interest and influence has been deep and longstanding. They have always been one of the area's major landowners and today Sir John Colfox farms in the area and lives in the village. He has managed to both carefully introduce modern day farming techniques and keep the estate intact. This has given the village a feeling of great stability. Sir John is the hub around which village life revolves and his initiatives are clearly helping Symondsbury adjust almost painlessly to the pressures of late twentieth century life. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Wootton Fitzpaine.

(b) WOOTTON FITZPAINE AND WHITCHURCH CANONICORUM

At the risk of offending the inhabitants of both villages I will for the sake of convenience dare to speak of Wootton Fitzpaine and Whitchurch Canonicorum in the same breath. The villages lie no more than a hefty stone's throw apart some five miles west of Bridport and because they are fortunate enough to be situated at the edge of the Marshwood Vale both are entrenched in the most beautiful of surroundings. But the similarities stop there.

Wootton Fitzpaine is perhaps typical of many smaller West Dorset villages. Along with a declining population it has recently lost its primary school, has no shops, no pub, no Rector (the Rector from Whitchurch drives over to the small unnamed church every third week), very little social life and virtually no prospects. It has, however, a charming village hall at the back of which is situated a tiny club room and skittle alley. The hall sees action in the form of bingo one Tuesday in four and the alley has matches staged there every other Wednesday. Not the least of Wootton's problems is the fact that many of its cottages ramble in a somewhat aimless fashion across the whole of the parish, the actual village centre as such being a rather uninteresting gathering of properties close to the village hall. In effect, and unlike Symondsbury where the church, pub, school and shops are all within shouting distance of each other, there are no natural meeting places. The church, which might have provided such a place, is some way out of the village centre and, as I indicated earlier, services are held there only once every three weeks anyway. Thus in their everyday lives the people of Wootton have little opportunity of actually getting together or simply passing the time of day with each other. Wootton also suffers from a distinct lack of influential personnel. There is no one to whom the villagers can turn, no person of imagination or initiative, no figure-head, no one with a vested interest in seeing the village grow and prosper. Comparing this situation with the one at Symondsbury and the role of the Colfox family in particular, one begins to see quite clearly that leadership has a crucial part to play in maintaining the vitality of a parish. A brief look at Wootton's recent history might illustrate the point.

At one time, and not so long ago at that, the whole parish formed a large estate owned and ruled over by the Pass family. An industrialist from Bristol, Alfred Capper Pass moved into Wootton Fitzpaine Manor towards the end of the nineteenth century. His only son, Alfred Douglas, was born there in 1885 and took over the estate after his father's death in the thirties. Alfred Douglas was evidently a man of great energy; High Sheriff of Dorset, 1922; elected to Dorset County Council, 1913; Chairman of the County Finance Committee for many years; Vice Chairman of the County Council, 1939 - 46; Chairman, 1946 - 55; had an active interest in the boy scout movement from 1920; President of Capper Pass and Son Ltd; Smelters, Bristol and Hull; Chairman, 1934 - 60; and so it goes on. He was also the father of five daughters. His wife Olive, (who distinguished herself by becoming the world's leading authority on Dorset Feather Stitchery and wrote a book on the same) apparently hated living in the Manor House and lost no time in moving out when her husband died in 1970. She herself died in 1973 leaving the estate - which since the late fifties had been showing signs of stress - to the two remaining daughters living in Wootton. They obviously had neither the time nor the inclination to attempt rescuing the estate and began selling off land and property to farmers or anyone for that matter who could afford the prices. The Manor House itself was sold to Sir Esmond Durlacher, a retired banker, in 1973. Had Alfred D. Pass had a son then perhaps the estate would not have suffered quite so much, but this is doubtful. For the Pass family never were a Dorset family as such and their interests lay in industry rather than with farming or the land in general. Nevertheless, so long as the estate remained intact and under the control of one family the villagers felt reasonably secure and Wootton always had prospects. When the estate was broken up rapid disintegration set in. Jobs were lost, younger families were forced to move out, retired people moved in, community spirit dwindled, hopes died. Hence nowadays Wootton is a declining village having no real identity of its own and living out its days in the shadow of Whitchurch Canonicorum's small but dynamic community.

Whitchurch is perhaps the most dominant parish in the Marshwood Vale area and its close proximity to Wootton is certainly not helping the latter overcome its severe problems. The problems of Whitchurch are less acute. With just under seven hundred inhabitants the parish throbs gently in a deep valley and the main approach road is steep and winding. The village boasts one of the finest churches in the whole of Dorset, a Post Office, village hall and pub-come-general store. The village hall committee is particularly active and plays, recitals and general meetings are enthusiastically encouraged. The hall also houses a morning playgroup three times a week when mothers bring in their children from all over the Vale. Hence Whitchurch is gradually becoming a small rural centre, a place to go to, a village of interests. It also has in the local Rector a man of some vision, an outward looking individual who loves the parish passionately and puts his whole effort into helping it develop. Of course Whitchurch, like every village in West Dorset, has undergone considerable changes. The old established pattern of community life (i.e. the solid farming community) has given way to a new more fluid social structure but, unlike Wootton, the transition has been positive with a satisfying pattern of social life emerging.

I have briefly described three of our four villages; Symondsbury, Wootton Fitzpaine and Whitchurch Canonicorum. I could go on and talk about many more but I would be doing nothing more than varying the same theme - for instance, Symondsbury might be grouped with Netherbury or Broadwindsor, Whitchurch with Thorncombe and Chideock, Wootton with Stoke Abbott, Marshwood and perhaps a dozen more. However, it has no doubt been noted that I have as yet made no mention of either the coast or Lyme Bay in general. This omission will be rectified forthwith.

(c) LYME BAY AND CHARMOUTH

The coastline of West Dorset sweeps in a dramatic arc (Lyme Bay) from Lyme Regis to Swyre. The sandstone cliffs which run from Burton Bradstock round to Lyme Regis are spectacular landfalls but can be extremely dangerous, as are the pebbled beaches which shelve steeply into the sea, particularly at Cogden Beach and Burton Bradstock. Charmouth and Lyme Regis boast the safest beaches in the area and are thus popular spots for families with small children. All in all the coastline displays great natural beauty and the coastal run from Weymouth to Bridport abounds with breathtaking views. This is no exaggeration, it is a fact verifiable by the thousands of holiday makers who return to the area each year. The village of Charmouth attracts such people.

Charmouth village lies on the coast about five miles west of Bridport. Its population has grown rapidly over the last twenty years or so and it is now third only to Bothenhampton and Bradpole (both virtually suburbs of Bridport) when it comes to a head count. However, it is a small parish in terms of area (440 acres) and with 2.31 persons per acre is by far the most densely populated village in West Dorset. Many factors have influenced this growth but the increase in tourism has perhaps been the overriding factor. After all, Charmouth is ideally situated to exploit this trade. The main A35 road passes straight through its centre and anyone travelling along the south coast from Weymouth to (say) Exeter must go through the village which, with its ample car-parking facilities, is a handy stopping place. Its beach is long, wide and sandy constituting a toddlers paradise and in summer the stretch is packed to suffocation with families on holiday. Persons looking for a quieter time are within minutes of the open countryside or the cliff walks which are exhilarating but tiring (particularly up towards Golden Cap which rises high and east of the main beach). Thus Charmouth can offer the best or worst of both worlds depending on one's point of view. Hotels and guest houses are in abundance and there are many cottages and flats displaying notices "to let". The local economy is of course heavily dependent on this summer trade which has the effect of providing much temporary employment, particularly for young school leavers who do not demand a great deal in the way of remuneration.

Predictably, Charmouth is as quiet a village as any once winter has come upon it, but with its pubs, shops, school, halls, active Women's Institute, scout and guide groups, youth club, football team, church activities and badminton club, the parish in no way dies a complete death. Indeed, it seems almost inevitable that it will continue to grow and should more cheap housing become available (there are a number of council properties already in the village) and perhaps one or two small industries build up then it will for sure develop into a resort of some stature. Lyme Regis has already achieved such status.

(d) LYME REGIS

Lyme Regis lies close to the Devon border ten miles or so west of Bridport. Like Charmouth it relies heavily on the influx of holiday makers to stimulate its economy, but whereas Charmouth is going through a period of development Lyme Regis is rigidly established as a typical English holiday resort. Hotels and guest houses parade themselves about the town and the back streets are littered with terraced properties offering 'Bed and Breakfast' or 'Full Board'. Gift shops and cafes are in abundance, the obligatory miniature golf course and 'putting' green are well signposted and the wide promenade runs above a small sandy beach and harbour where one has the opportunity of hiring small boats and dingies or simply walking along the famous 'Cobb'.(1) One can also purchase such niceties as Dorset Cream Teas, funny hats, ice-cream, monkeys on sticks, genuine fishermen's smocks and Lyme Regis 'rock' from one of the many tiny stalls which adorn the perimeter of the bay. Every now and then the promenade (which is towered over by a huge green bank forming a sort of natural amphitheatre) provides the setting for performances by a musical band or a troupe of travelling players, as does the small theatre which puts on puppet shows and other entertainments mainly for the amusement of children. However, for all this, Lyme Regis is not and never was a resort in the style of say Skegness or Southend or Blackpool. It never was raided by the marauding working-classes, never was a 'Kiss-me-quick' type place. Lyme Regis is more refined, more middle-class, more mannered. A place where people really do take their litter home and dogs really are kept on leads. It became popular with the landed gentry (particularly from Bath) towards the end of the eighteenth century and has retained its attractiveness for the wealthy ever since. Today Lyme Regis provides some of the finest examples of Regency architecture in the country, and although it has seen development since, most of the properties are ordinary compared with those of the earlier period.

Lyme Regis is set on the side of a massive hill and seems to hover precariously over the sea looking ready to slide unceremoniously into the waters at any moment. In fact the whole area is riddled with underground faults (on Christmas Day 1839 masses of land to the west of the town simply broke away into the English Channel) and is therefore not a popular spot with modern day developers. Indeed the construction of the town as a whole appears to have been afforded little consideration at all. Its streets ramble without order up and down the steepest of gradients and the main road leading into the town from the east is so narrow as to be almost impassable at times. Thus it is difficult to see Lyme Regis changing dramatically over the next decade or so; the whole landscape would need to be chopped up to allow this and its small but influential population (about a third of whom are retired) would strongly oppose any such action. Over the years the people of Lyme Regis have bonded together to form a closed but active community. Those persons prepared to adhere to its standards and accept its middle-class culture are welcomed, but there is little to encourage working-class people to stay. Its comprehensive school, Woodroffe, is considered by many to be a 'cut above' others in the area and during the course of my research (when I was taking questionnaires into schools) I found it the most difficult of places to gain entry. Lyme Regis is quite autonomous, almost set apart from the rest, and will decide its own destiny irrespective of outside pressures.

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(1) Built in the reign of Edward I. The Cobb is a stone built harbour, designed originally for the protection of fishing boats, a trade upon which Lyme Regis depended quite heavily.

(e) BEAMINSTER

Without wishing to sound too cruel, Beaminster is a somewhat insignificant town lying six miles north of Bridport. During the last century its population fell from 3,270 in 1841 to 1,702 in 1901 but since then gradual development has seen it rise to just under 2,500. In recent years two small council housing estates have been built up and quite a bit of private development has been constructed outside the town centre. Even so, Beaminster barely qualifies for the title of town. Its centre, situated compactly around what is no more than an excuse for a village square, is extremely small and offers only the basics as far as shopping or general amenities are concerned. An almost derelict ex-police station houses the local education authority youth centre, two garages about half a mile apart seem to wait endlessly for customers, a couple of small factories provide some employment and a few shops, including an excellent fish 'n' chip shop, allow the local people some sense of independence. And this is far from easy, for Beaminster has to suffer pressures not only from Bridport but also Crewkerne, which lies about six miles to its north west, and to a certain extent Yeovil, a dominating town some ten miles to the north east. Even Bridport itself has to compete strongly with these two Somerset centres and as all three towns (i.e. Crewkerne, Beaminster and Bridport) are located no more than thirteen miles apart along the same stretch of highway it becomes easy to see why Beaminster has suffered the most. The area is simply incapable of supporting three major centres. But Beaminster would appear to have good potential as far as growth is concerned. It is already an educational centre being the site for a comprehensive school and the playing fields just off the main street are remarkably large. Its main organisations are quite active, particularly the football team of which the town is especially proud and its cricket team always attracts the best of the local players. Also the people are passionately devoted to their town and will defend it for ever against the strongest opposition. Its most dominant building is undoubtably the Church which, when viewed from the surrounding hills, stands out like a beacon on a black night. The same view also gives one a clue as to the true nature of the parish. The old Dorset town of years gone by is as a chrysalis, cocooned in a ring of new buildings and a curious mix of the ancient and modern is seeing the town enter a torpid stage of passive development. Beaminster is changing and will continue to do so, but it will not be hurried. The traditions, the legacies of the old Dorsetshire labourers, are still remembered and fervently held on to. The people will not be taken for granted again. They will not allow themselves to be pushed into strange unfamiliar situations. Rather, they will adjust to the twenty-first century in their own way and in their own time. Like a thief in the night they will creep upon it and take that which suits them best.

(f) BRIDPORT

Bridport is West Dorset's major town and perhaps the most interesting; it is certainly the prettiest. A market town, it lies in a deep valley fifteen miles west of Dorchester (the county town), ten miles east of Lyme Regis and about a mile from the coast. It has three main streets, East Street and West Street which form part of the main A35 road and South Street, which runs to West Bay (the town's port) and on along the coast towards Weymouth. All three streets are impressively wide and meet at the town centre where the Town Hall, a distinctive piece of Georgian architecture, dominates the scene. Packed tightly along the sides of the streets are the main shops, supermarkets, banks and building societies and set high above these (for every property is seemingly three, four, or even five floors high, counting the basements - and I am convinced that there is as much activity below the streets of Bridport as there is above) are the offices of accountants, surveyors, estate agents, solicitors and private businesses in general. Also these basements and upper storeys provide much welcome accommodation in the way of 'flats' for the young or unattached. Cramped in between the shops and offices are some fifteen public houses, all within five minutes staggering distance of each other and a couple of smart hotels, the Greyhound and the Bull. The town's most prestigious hotel is the West Mead and stands in its own grounds about three quarters of a mile west of the centre. The hotel was once a magnificent Manor House owned and lived in by the Colfox family.

Filtering away from the main streets are numerous alleyways, smaller streets, narrow passages and courtyards all of which form part of the old town and are packed with terraced cottages or strange looking buildings of one sort or another. Beyond this maze of a town centre one finds the larger council housing estates of Skilling and Court Orchard, private developments such as Coneygar estate and the newer properties of Bothenhampton

Village and two small industrial/trading estates. Spread throughout the old and new are the town's churches, its art centre, W.I. hall, library, youth hostel, youth centre, scout halls, primary schools and playing fields. Then drifting away from the town in virtually every direction are more private houses (some of them quite spectacular), 'flats', three car service stations, old peoples' homes and some more smaller council developments.

South of the town lies West Bay with its small harbour, golf club and holiday attractions in general - large caravan and tent park, fishing off the pier, amusement arcade, boating facilities, beach shops and kiosks, summer fair, three large pubs and a fine hotel. All-in-all Bridport is a compact mixture of contrasting styles with the effects of urbanisation and commercialisation standing out clearly against a background of fading rurality. The actual 'bricks and mortar' of recent developments are solid symbols of this change.

Basically, the town, with West Bay, is a holiday resort. In the summer special licensing allows the public houses and hotels extended hours of opening to take advantage of the extra trade and the town's street market bustles with activity. The market, which operates on Wednesday and Saturdays, attracts stall holders from as far away as Southampton and Bristol and their vans and lorries can be seen streaming into the town just after dawn in an attempt to both avoid the heavy traffic, which jams up the highways from nine o'clock in the morning, and secure a popular 'pitch' from which to sell their goods. So, in a way, Bridport, like Lyme Regis and Charmouth depends heavily on holiday makers to boost its economy. But the town is also a small service centre for West Dorset as a whole and attracts many people from the surrounding villages. Even so it struggles to compete adequately with the larger towns of Somerset, which are not far away and many people prefer to go to Crewkerne or Yeovil in order to conduct their business. Even the cities of Exeter and Salisbury attract many West Dorset folk particularly at Christmas and Easter time.

Bridport may confidently be regarded as a closed and solidly integrated community. It is 'positively' charged from within and the haze of its external serenity certainly conceals a vibrant inner social life - it functions, as it were, with the blinds pulled down. Now although clubs and societies are multifarious they are somewhat overburdened (some would say overwhelmed) with an excessive complement of old people and herein, perhaps, lies a clue as to why a general languor haunts not only Bridport town but the rural villages also. General development has taken place, granted, but it has done so at an extremely slow pace and the presence and pressure of older people (and by 'older' I am referring to persons well into their seventies) on most of the powerful and influential committees (particularly the local town and rural district councils and the overriding West Dorset District Council) has without doubt been a major factor in dictating the leisurely pace of developmental proceedings. Maintenance of the status quo is taken for granted by the majority, progress is painstakingly considered and always conservative and the 'force-field' of the older generation ever present to rebound 'radical' ideas back either from whence they came, or into the community as a whole. There is talk of a 20,000 population target by the turn of the century. A historical perspective would seem to cast doubt upon this notion, for as far back as 1965 population figures of 30,000 were being predicted and Bridport was being thought of as a centre of some stature, both serving and maintaining a balanced and energetic population in the district. Balance and energy would seem to be qualities most lacking in 1979. The fear that rapid development (particularly industrial) might impinge upon the tourist trade was, and still is, a major cause for concern. Planners and councillors, realize only too well that although tourism can be of great financial value to a community, it offers little scope for both ambitious, generously qualified school leavers and graduates, or skilled and semi-skilled people. So, today, a great debate may be heard; to build or not to build - a new marina that is. That such a project would be good for tourism is not in doubt, but would it be good for the local community or, for that matter West Dorset as a whole? Local councillors and the like will need all their experience and judgement to offer positive and meaningful solutions to this and many other problems. I often feel that Bridport is in danger of being crushed by the weight of its own indifference, but this is certainly not the case. Last year a thirty-one year old shopkeeper was actually elected to the Town Council and his verbal battles with the older long-serving members are becoming regular features in the local 'Bridport News'. Not that their ideas or beliefs vary all that much fundamentally. Most people in Bridport take it for granted that change and development are inevitable but opinions become divided regarding the direction in which these inevitabilities should move and the tempo at which they should progress. My own fear is that the development of Bridport might be at the expense of the rural hinterland and the way of life that exists therein. Hence, in some ways I am happy to see a situation in which the status quo prevails. Without the magnetic attraction of a rapidly developing parish town drawing in people from rural communities, there is still time to both try and rejuvenate from within ailing settlements, such as Wootton Fitzpaine, and also concentrate on consolidating the position of fertile, established, and thriving parishes such as Whitchurch Canonicorum. If the area as a whole is to prosper, Bridport will need to support the rural settlements without overpowering them and also perform an economic, social and cultural balancing act of some merit; providing and maintaining services for young people will be an important part of that act.

SUMMARY

In this chapter I have attempted to paint a broad backdrop against which young people in West Dorset play out their adolescence. Basically, this backdrop shows West Dorset to be an area of extreme natural beauty depending heavily on tourism to boost both employment opportunities and the local economy in general. The population totals approximately twenty seven thousand with just under half living in the three main towns. The rest are scattered throughout forty three small villages. About a third of the population are over the age of fifty five, many of them retired, with the under twenties accounting for some twenty five per cent. On the face of it, West Dorset is a quaint, idyllic rural backwater. However, this outward tranquillity and general impression of 'timelessness' (together with the fact that there are a number of solidly integrated communities) often deflects one's attention from PARTICULAR instances of serious rural decline. Varying incidence of depopulation coupled with the loss of local services have (in a nutshell) made it extremely difficult for some people, particularly young people, to carry on living in a West Dorset setting. How young people in the area come to terms with their rural adolescence and how the Youth Service in Dorset is helping them adjust to adulthood will be dealt with shortly. Before doing so, however, I will introduce the reader to three families residing in a Marshwood Vale village. I do this for the simple reason that young people must contend, cope and adjust to the adult world as they find it. The three families described albeit briefly in the next chapter are representative of the adult world in West Dorset; for the adolescent, their presence may be considered significant.

CHAPTER TWO

PART I

THREE FAMILIES IN THE MARSHWOOD VALE

Had I been able to concentrate on the study of a single community I would, no doubt, have considered the notion of social class in some detail. Even though this was not possible, my reconnaissance brought me into contact with a number of interesting characters. Lower class labourers and farm workers, retired middle-class professionals and the wealthy 'Upper - Upper' class, including the Old Squirearchy. In one Marshwood Vale village (for the sake of anonymity I will call it 'Haughton') such characters live within a few minutes of each other.

Early in January 1978 I contacted a local rural Parish Councillor living in Haughton, Mr.Dalby. I told him I worked for the Local Education Authority and that I was carrying out research looking at the provision of services for young people living in West Dorset. Probably because he was a retired schoolmaster, the idea seemed to catch his imagination and in answer to my questions concerning persons who might be interested in helping me set up a small village youth club in Haughton, he put me on to a Mr.Kitson, a local labourer. I telephoned Kitson and in a roundabout sort of way invited myself over to have a chat with him about the project.

Tuesday, January 24th

A full moon, but the Vale is blacker than hell. A vicious night belting down with rain and freezing cold. What do kids do round here on nights like this?

Although it stands just outside the village square, opposite the village hall, I spend twenty minutes trying to track down Kitson's cottage. There are no street lights in the village, no street corners, no sign of life. Half the properties seem to be in total darkness and I later learn that a fair number are occupied only in the summer.

Mr.Kitson's cottage is small, 'two up, two down', and I step through the door directly into the kitchen. The room is about ten by eight (feet) and packed to suffocation with a small table and three chairs, a somewhat battered looking 'kitchenette', odd cupboards here and there, all spewing over with old clothes and cutlery and bits of old cloth of every shape and size, pots and pans are all over the place, mainly on the small draining board at the side of a chipped enamel sink and farm implements and a shot gun hang on the door of a small 'hidy-hole' under the stairs, which also houses two or three plastic bags which seem full of old shoes and boots. All in all the place is a wreck, but very warm and after my drive through the Vale, very welcome.

Kitson sits himself down at the table and continues to clean three or four pairs of boots. The boots seem very old and I imagine the Kitsons acquired them 'second hand' for they are a particularly expensive type which I know well. The leather is cracked but supple, and as fine as gossamer. Mr.Kitson almost caresses them with a piece of yellow cloth. Obviously these boots mean a lot to him and the family and no doubt they will have to see out one or two more hard working winters. They are, in a way, the 'tools of his trade' and I suspect he performs this cleaning ritual almost every night.

Mrs.Kitson stands by the sink holding the baby and through an open door I see three more children sitting glued to the television set. Two of the children occupy a small settee, the other sits on the floor just in front of them. They all wear rough looking woollen jumpers and remind me very much of some of the poorer kids I went to school with twenty odd years ago in Wigan; they all wore 'jumble sale' jumpers, faded yellow being a popular colour. Mr.Kitson wears a heavy sweater, his wife a jumper and a thick brown cardigan. She smiles and seems the friendly type, short and plumpish - just like the baby. Mr.Kitson is well built, not that tall, but broad and solid looking. He can probably dig all day without breaking sweat. His face is weather beaten and supports a raging pair of 'mutton chop' side whiskers. Like a good many West Dorset folk he has a magnificent set of teeth, an attribute put down to the lime-based water. The preliminaries over, we begin by talking about his work.(1)

> ".... well I do a bit of everything really. Cut trees an' hedges; a bit o' garden' 'ere an' there; ploughin', when I can get it; loggin'; any farm work if I can get it. It's not too bad in summer - bloody 'ard in winter though. It's not too bad if you know a few people, farmers like. I know lots o' people round 'ere so I don't do too bad. I've lived round 'ere all my life, well round 'ere an' Thornchurch... (a village in Devon, just across from Haughton) ... It can get a bit rough in winter. We don't get much snow(2) but we gets plenty o' rain an' wind, and then the lanes is full o' s (mud from the fields) or trees that's been blown over."

In a subsequent conversation with a chap who helps compile the electoral register for West Dorset parishes it turned out that Mr.Kitson was known by name to the office. The gentleman agreed that a number of people never made the registers because "They move around the area like gypsies. One week in Dorset, then in Somerset or Devon, then back to Dorset. It's difficult to keep track of them." Obviously, and it was not surprising (in retrospect) that Mr.Kitson had remarked "We don't vote. There's no bugger worth votin' for, an' even if there was we still wouldn't vote." Mr.Kitson is very much anti-establishment and he uses up a fair number of profanities when abusing the local Member of Parliament. I remembered that when I originally telephoned him to arrange our meeting his attitude had been extremely guarded, particularly when I mentioned the fact that I was employed by the County Council, his suspicions were aroused almost instinctively. He is clearly a man who lives on wits and any money he earns legitimately is probably doubled by other means. Dalby referred to him as a "bit of rough character" and another resident in Haughton, one of the wealthy retired, thought him "a very slippery customer indeed". But the Kitsons endure a very precarious existence, financially at any rate. Self-employed labourers must work almost every hour Gods sends in order to take home anything like a decent wage. They are forced to squeeze whatever they can out of employers and even in Bridport I came across many instances of people, both young and old, relying on 'back handers' to boost their official pay packet. West Dorset folk rely on the 'hidden economy' as much, if not more, than urban dwellers. Like the local Gas Board engineer who will service your central heating "for a fiver" or one of the local carpet fitters who will "do 'e a very nice job for a couple o' notes, an' I knows where 'e can get some cheap carpet too". It is all a matter of getting to know the 'right' people, and in a place as closely integrated as Bridport (and more so villages) this is simple once you become accepted as a member of the community; becoming accepted is the difficult part. Once this has been accomplished becoming involved in blackmarket trade is almost a subliminal experience, extremely subtle yet difficult to avoid.

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(1) For the sake of continuity I have run both Mr.and Mrs.Kitson's dialogue together. My own comments are in parentheses.

(2) In February 1978 freak blizzards brought the whole of Dorset to a virtual standstill. These alien conditions brought chaos to the Marshwood Vale.

On some of these matters Kitson is reticent. He says nothing concerning the home he occupies, although I make several comments about its being a warm and cosy place. I later learn that the cottage is owned by a Mrs.Kennerly (of whom I will speak more) and 'rented' to the Kitsons. I suspect the Kitsons live almost rent free, Mrs.Kennerly allowing them the privilege for 'services rendered'. The Kitsons go on:

> "..... it's bad for kids round 'ere. There's no houses or no jobs. A lot of 'ems gotta go away if they wants a job ..... I've never fancied livin' in the town, bein' born an' bred round 'ere like. I don't know what ours'll do when they gets older. There's nothin' much for young 'uns round 'ere either. Kids don't get involved much". (At this point Mrs.Kitson uses the word 'insular' and this strikes me as being rather out of character. 'Insular' is not a popular word amongst West Dorset labourers and even Mr.Kitson shows signs of incredulity at his wife's sudden lurch away from monosyllabic utterances. Mr.Barker, a painter and decorator from Bridport, once told me, "We's not as daft as we acts down 'ere". He is right, and Mrs.Kitson's 'insular' makes me blink once and think twice about whom I am dealing with) ... ".... that's why I've been trying to get the kids playin' football. Mrs.Kennerly said we could use a bit o' land behind our village 'all. There's one rusty goal post but nowhere to get changed an' that. We just mucks about really"... (Would he be interested in bringing some of his youngsters to the Youth Centre at Bridport? I could probably lay on transport)... ".... I don't know about that. These kids is a bit shy of

others an' we don't really have a team, them's all different ages see. We got some eight year olds an' some fifteen year olds, an' 'alf of 'ems girls. We don't take it serious, we just 'as a bit o' fun"... (So they don't play in any competitions or friendly matches?) ... "Well last summer we played a few matches against kids from a couple o' other villages. We 'ad some scouts stayin' round 'ere, they was campin' in a field near Whitchurch. We played 'em one night down 'ere. By Christ that were a time I'll tell 'e. See the kids round 'ere's not used to strangers, they get a bit aggressive when strangers comes round like. Well we plays these scouts an' they must 'a' thought we was animals. Our kids kicked s out o' these lads, an' the girls were worse than the boys. The Scout Master's face was bloody purple with shoutin' like, an' he called one of our girls a vicious b an' she poked 'im in the eye. I'm not sure takin' 'em to Bridport's a good idea"...... (I tell him the offer of transport stands but don't push the idea of taking the children into Bridport. What is his reaction to setting up a small one night a week youth club in Haughton - in say the village hall. Would we get any help from local people?) ... "I think that's a better idea than takin' kids into Bridport, but I don't know if Mrs.Kennerly (trustee of the village hall) would let the hall be used. You'd 'ave to ask 'er. She's not a bad sort though, she's alright. She might say yes. I think we'd get 'elp like. I'd 'elp, an' the Mrs., an' there's a few chaps round 'ere who might 'elp out a bit. An' there's a teacher lives in the village, teaches at Charmouth, 'e might 'elp. Some of the old folks might kick up a bit of a stink though. There's some right old twats livin' round 'ere I'll tell 'e ...." (Mrs.Kitson is somewhat disgusted and gets up to put the kettle on. Kitson is unrepentant) "Well it's true. Some o' these old buggers come down 'ere, buy a bungalow or somethin' an' that's it. They don't want anythin' to do with the village or folks like us. Mind you I can't blame 'em, wantin' to come an' live round 'ere like. It's a bloody nice place. Like them 'us buys a place just for 'olidays. We don't like it round 'ere, some 'ouses round 'ere are just boarded up in winter. But there's nothin' we can do about it, it's not their fault they got money an' we aint. What gets me though is the way some o' these old b treats us when they do come an' live 'ere. Last summer we wanted to get the kids a new football. Well we does a little collection like, an' the mums an' dads chucks in a bit. But we's still a bit short, so I goes an' knocks on the door of a chap who moved into the big house near the church..." (I know the place well. It is a huge mansion of a building. Mrs.Kitson brings the tea and Mr.Kitson's enthusiastic conversation has brought his eldest son into the kitchen. He is told to go back and watch television. He does so, reluctantly.) ..."He's lived there about two years, but nobody's really seen 'im. Well I've got about 'alf a dozen kids wi' me see, an' I'm knockin' on the door. He comes to

> the door like an' I tells 'im we's collectin' for this 'ere football so 'us kids can 'ave a decent game like. Well 'e thinks I'm beggin' for money, so I shows 'im the old ball, which the kids 'as got, an' tells 'im that we's trying to get a team up for the village: "I'm not that interested in the village, and I still don't believe you so why don't you just go away", he says. "Why don't you just p off", I says.
>
> "That's the sort o' person you gotta put up wi' round 'ere! Last November were a good laugh. A few of us chaps round 'ere decided to give the kids a real bonfire night. We asks Mrs.Kennerly could we use the field behind the 'all an' she said O.K. An' then me an' a few others gets the trailers an' tractors out, an' carts a load o' logs an' old trees, an' anythin' that'll burn like, an' stacks it in the field. The wives done some grub, nothin' special, an' we 'as a few fireworks for the kids. 'Course we gets the cider goin' nicely. An' we 'as a real good night. It were bloody good, weren't it Mrs.? (his wife abounds with approval). Some o' the old folks joins us an' as a bloody good time too. But some o' they old buggers I've been tellin' 'e about don't like it see, too much noise an' that. We seen 'em pokin' their 'eads through the curtains. Every time we seen a face we made more bloody noise. An' then we throws a few 'bangers' over the gardens, so they pokes their heads through again, an' then we makes even more bloody noise. It were a real good night. F 'em, that's what I says. If we can't make a bit of noise one night a year in our own bloody village, it's a poor show ...."

Mr. and Mrs.Kitson took great delight in relating their stories to me. There is obvious animosity between the indigenous labouring population and the retiring immigrants. Of course their motives for living in the village are completely different. For Mr.Kitson and his family the village and the Vale are his life, his bread and butter. For many of the older people the village is a place for dying. Mrs.Kitson told me that some of the old people "just move down 'ere to die. Nothin' else, they just comes 'ere to pass away." The more I listened to Kitson and the more I took in the contents of his home, and drank his tea, and watched his children watching television silently, the more I thought about Wittgenstien's 'The limits of my language are the limits of my world'. Sitting in his kitchen I was experiencing Kitson's world, absorbing it into my own, and the limits of his world seemed so clear: the cottage, the village, farms in the Marshwood Vale, the gun behind the door, the boots on the table, the trailer in the yard, his kids, his wife, hustling for 'bread', fighting the land, fighting the old folks, stretching for recognition, knowing his place. For Kitson, and many others like him, this is the way it has always been, and the way it will always be; nothing more. Labourers and their families in the Marshwood Vale are poor, in some cases extremely poor. They must cope with an economy inflated beyond their means in the only way they know how, by living each day as it comes and not expecting too much from an area which they clearly are in love with.

Wednesday, January 4th

This morning I went to see Mr.Dalby. Both Mr.and Mrs.Dalby were teachers and retired to Haughton about eight years ago. They now live in a bungalow just inside the village, about quarter of a mile from the Kitsons.

The bungalow is set slightly above the main road and from the outside appears smallish though quite modern. The garden in front is immaculate and well laid out. It obviously receives much attention, even in winter, and the lawn, rockery and herbaceous borders are merely waiting for a little sun to bring out the best in them. From the main front door one steps into a carpeted hall and then into an extremely bright lounge. The brightness is due to double glazed French windows and a picture window, which almost fill one wall. A finely 'glossed' door leads into the kitchen/dining room. Again, this area is drenched in natural light and even on a dull day (as this morning was) the atmosphere inside the whole bungalow is bright and airy. It is also quiet and extremely restful, a far cry from Kitson's human menagerie. The photograph of a young graduate (the Dalby's son) stands on a walnut cabinet and one or two other well mounted pictures hang on the walls. To me, nothing seems out of place and everything matches perfectly: the carpets, the wallpaper, the photographs and pictures, the drinks cabinet, the glass fronted bookcase, the window drapes and furniture in general. All are good quality and polished to a high wax finish: "I have a lady from the village call two mornings a week, but I do quite a bit myself around the house. I like a room to be neat and tidy. I enjoy being in a room that's been well looked after." The Dalby's home is well looked after and all in all is a soothing place to relax in.

I had been given Mr.Dalby's name by the Secretary of the Dorset Community Council. He said Dalby was on the local Parish Council (in West Dorset there are various Parish Councils, often amalgamations of individual parishes; the Bride Valley Parish Council for instance) and at one meeting had expressed concern that young people in the area have nothing to do in the evenings. The Secretary thought Dalby might be a good contact so I telephoned him and arranged a meeting.

The Dalby's were pleased to see me. "We rarely get visitors. My son and his wife and children come to see us a couple of times a year, but that's about it. He's teaching up in Leicestershire."

It is quiet round here isn't it?

"Well it is, but that's why we came to Haughton in the first place. It's so peaceful and no one bothers us. We can potter around and do whatever we like. I spend a lot of time in the garden, my wife too for that matter. The roses are her pride and joy, under no circumstances must ANYONE go near her roses."

Do they manage to get out at all?

"Yes, quite often. If it's a fine weekend we can get out into the countryside. It makes a change. On market day we usually get into Bridport or sometimes Axminster, and if we feel like driving we can get to Honiton quite quickly or Dorchester, although we don't get to Dorchester very often these days. We'll probably start going more later in the year. To be quite honest we'd rather not drive in the summer. The main A35 gets awfully busy with holiday traffic. Of course we have to go into town every now and then but we're quite happy just to stay around the bungalow.

Any particular interests?

"Lots and lots. Like I said, we spend a good deal of time in the garden. There's a lovely stretch at the back of the bungalow and we like to keep it up to scratch. In the summer we can open the French windows and the patio and garden become part of the lounge. Of course I do a tremendous amount of reading and my wife likes to crochet. She's a member of the Women's Institute and that keeps her pretty busy. They're always up to something.

Where does the W.I. meet?

"In the village hall, or sometimes in someone's house. It depends how active they are, but mainly in the village hall. My wife also helps out at the playgroup over in Whitchurch. She goes a couple of mornings a week. She's always loved children and I suppose it's a case of once a teacher always a teacher."

Is the playgroup very active?

"Very much so. Mothers bring their children in from all over the Vale. I don't think there's a playgroup even in Charmouth. I think Bridport or Lyme Regis are the only places with decent playgroups around here. That's why the playgroup at Whitchurch is so popular. Actually I think the Social Services are quite worried about some of the mothers who don't have transport and can't get their children into playgroups. You see, if a family is particularly isolated and the child hasn't any brothers or sisters, or maybe the brothers or sisters are out at school all day, then the child doesn't really get to play with any other children until it starts school. The Education Authority is quite worried about the length of time some of these children are taking to settle down at school, and the Social Services are worried about stress at home and all sorts of things. I'm not really sure. I didn't realise it of course until I came to live in the village, but for quite a few of these children their first day at school is their first time outside the village. And that can be quite a traumatic affair. Of course being ex-teachers ourselves we're still very interested in education."

This was apparent from Mr.Dalby's conversation. When I returned to Bridport I contacted the local Social Services and asked them what this "stress in the villages" was all about. Dalby was half right in his assessment. The Social Services were concerned that some children in villages might be at risk (physically, emotionally, educationally) because mothers were unable to take them to local playgroups, or that the children were simply starved of other children's company. This meant the children would be "under mum's feet" every minute of the day. In an effort to combat this problem the Social Services were attempting to mount a mobile Toy Library Service, and also provide the mothers with training in how to play with both the toys and their children. This may sound a little strange, it did to me when I first heard about it. What in fact the Social Services are trying to do is get these mothers playing with their children as other children would play with them. They would be training the mothers to act like children, to use the toys like children, to be like children. To be a friend to their children, rather than a mother. They were, however, only thinking about the idea. Later, I attended a Social Services weekly 'team talk' and most of the workers seemed pretty reluctant to take on the job. It would involve a tremendous amount of travelling, this was the biggest problem; the project amounted to almost 'house to house' therapy. In a rural area this takes some planning, not to mention the expense. That the Dalby's had even heard about the idea was, in retrospect, quite an achievement on their part. They must keep their ears pretty 'close to the ground' at these W.I. meetings and playgroup mornings and Council meetings.

What about the local Parish Council, and what did Mr.Dalby mean by the children not having anything to do in the evenings?

"Well the Council meet once a month and they're pretty quiet affairs really. No banging on tables or anything like that. We're all very civilized round here you know. I thought it might liven things up a little if I made a point about the youngsters not having anything to do in the evenings. It's pretty dull for young people round here in the winter you know."

I could understand this very well, but what exactly did Mr.Dalby have in mind?

"I'm not sure really. Some sort of youth club, or something like that I suppose. I'm not really sure what young people enjoy doing these days. When I was a youngster family life was more intimate. I don't know, these days doing things with the family seems to be out of fashion. I think something needs doing for the young people though. Of course last year we had the Silver Jubilee party for the children of the parish, and just a few weeks ago we had a splendid Christmas party in the village hall. The children really had super times. They were playing games and running about. I only popped my head round the door for a few minutes, but they were really getting into the swing of things. I don't know, I'm no expert and I couldn't really do anything practical, but I know I've seen one or two youngsters hanging around in the evenings, and that can't be a good thing. I like to see young people joining in activities or something."

Are there enough children living in Haughton to support a youth club should one open?

"Oh yes. There are quite a number of children here. I'm not sure just how many, perhaps thirty or forty."

And what about leaders? Is there anybody who might lend a hand?

"I would have thought so. Probably the best man to see is Mr.Kitson. He runs a sort of village football team and gets on ever so well with the children. He's a bit of a rough character though, very old Dorsetshire labourer type, you know. He would probably help."

Would the village hall be available? Say one evening a week?

"Well, now you see the village hall is owned, well not so much owned, sort of controlled, by Mrs.Kennerly. Her permission would be needed. She is the person to see. In a way she is Haughton."

Who is Mrs.Kennerly and where does she live?

"Mrs.Kennerly is one of the daughters of old Colonel Peters. Colonel Peters died about eight years ago, just before we moved here I think. The Peters family owned just about all the land and property in and around Haughton. This is going back a few years mind you. Colonel Peters had four daughters and Mrs.Kennerly is the only one still living in the village. Actually she lives just outside the village in a large house, I think it's called Hillside House. She really is the Queen Bee around here. She organised all the Jubilee celebrations and I remember at a meeting that was being held in the village hall, it was about the children's Christmas Party, Mrs.Kennerly swept in, took one look at the plans and scrapped the lot: "We don't need this, we don't need that, we'll do this, that and the others, now who can organise this." She's a real ball of fire alright. You know the funny thing was, just before she came in we'd all been saying, "now we've made these plans, let's stick to them", and when she started changing everything not one person said a word, not a single word. She's a fine person though, a little abrasive maybe, very dominant, but she is a lady who knows her own mind and speaks it as well. If we want to do anything in the village, she will have to say 'yes'."

The Dalby's clearly live in awe of this Mrs.Kennerly, meeting her will surely be an experience. I thought, for a moment, that Mr.Dalby was going to stand to attention when he first mentioned her name. She wields some power in this village, absolute power by the sound of it.

I thanked Mrs.Dalby for the tea she had made me, and then thanked them both for allowing me into their home. I think in a way they were sorry to see me go. Mr.Dalby is particularly charming, very much a gentleman, quiet and mannerly. They are a sweet couple but, in a way, very dull. It was obvious that Mr.Dalby was unwilling to make any positive moves on the matter of the youth club ("I'm no expert.... I couldn't get involved in any practical way....") and although he had only used the phrase "abrasive ... and very dominant" when describing Mrs.Kennerly, I got the feeling from Mrs.Dalby that really they inwardly disliked her general attitude. As a retired couple, the Dalby's gave me the impression of not really being 'at one' with their retirement. True, most of their time is spent reading or doing the garden or driving into Bridport every now and then, but these other activities, the Council, the Playgroup, the W.I., are entered into in a conspicuously subdued way. Mr.Dalby only "popped his head round the door" at the Christmas Party and one or two other comments from them make me wonder if, in fact, they were clear about what was going on in the village. For instance, Mrs.Dalby was convinced that most of the young people leaving school found both employment and housing locally. I had asked them specifically if teenagers in the village were ever forced to leave the area to look for work or a house if (say) they were thinking of getting married. Both Mr.and Mrs.Dalby said: "Well not really, they (the young people) always seem to find something. They always seem to get fixed up with some sort of job, on the farm or whatever." Yet Haughton experienced 20% depopulation between 1961 and 1971. May be it will experience the same fall between 1971 and 1981. I hope not. Haughton lost its school fifteen years ago, and there are no shops in the village. The village is more than 'quiet', it is positively 'dead'. However, there are a number of factors which go some way to vindicating the Dalby's assertions. In the first place, quite a few properties in the village and surrounding area are still part of the Peters' estate. They are, if you like, 'tied' to the village, and any young couple wanting a home would be at an advantage if they were born and bred locally. There is always the possibility, however, that the trustees of the estate might turn vacated properties into hard cash by putting them on to the open market, rather than renting them to local people wishing to stay in the village. Young couples in the Marshwood Vale have virtually no chance of competing with outside buyers in an open market situation. Another point, as there are very few school leavers living in the village at any one time, the possibility of finding work locally is often less of a problem then one might think, particularly if the young person is prepared to work on the farm for 'peanuts'. However, for anything other than farm work, a young person will have to travel. They may very well be able to carry on living in the village (with parents probably) but for work they will clearly need to look outside. It is a possibility that the Dalby's have, in recent years, witnessed a few of the more 'positive' cases, that is cases where young people have been able to find work locally and also remain in the village. However, one needs to look at the situation from a long term perspective, and in this the Dalby's are somewhat out of touch with reality. Their comments also applied only to the less able adolescents, academically speaking that is. The two or three youngsters whom the Dalby's knew to be working locally on farms were "not very bright, they couldn't really do anything else other than farm labouring. One boy, Robert, is a very good worker; but he doesn't read very well at all. I know my wife has tried to teach him a few words and that when he's been round here doing a bit of gardening. He's a very nice boy though. In a way it's a shame, but I suppose we need the labourers don't we?".

Relatively speaking, the Dalby's have short futures to look forward to, in ten years' time they will be well into their eighties. (Mr.Dalby at any rate.) In a way this anti-retirement behaviour (Council meetings and helping to organise summer fetes or whatever) is symbolic of a personal quest for past glories, a search for personal kudos. They are, if you like, still "hanging on in there". The Dalby's are genuine people, but not really up to the task of initiating positive change, and why should they be? They are not 'Haughton people'. They have no vested interest in seeing the quality of village life rise (or fall for that matter), not in the long term anyway. Perhaps they would like to think of themselves as 'do-gooders' or custodians of the status quo, but in real terms their public activity does little other than drain an already weakened social system. They have no real power, not in Haughton. The power is in the hands of the likes of Mrs.Kennerly, one of the old Squirearchy. However, the Dalby's, and many other retired people, would seem to have more power than local youth; they certainly have a bigger voice.

Thursday, January 26th.

This morning I have an audience with Mrs.Kennerly: ".... not before ten thirty, I'll be out, and not later than eleven, I must be away by eleven fifteen." I will arrive at Hillside House at ten forty. Thirty five minutes with Mrs.Kennerly is all I can probably take; it's all I've been allowed anyway. I think I should abstain from wearing the Youth Worker's traditional uniform ('jeans', gym shoes and printed sweat shirt) and go for the 'executive look' (suit, shirt and college tie). After all, I am out to impress and appearance may cut some ice with the lady, though I strongly doubt it. Mrs.Kennerly is heavily into 'breeding' and inherited wealth; I am not in the same class. Never mind, maybe she will just listen to what I have to say about the village youth club and forget the rest. I must remain hopeful.

The sign says 'Hillside House'. An arrow points the way, and as I am early I take my car slowly down the drive (which is part of a road leading into Charmouth wood). The house appears. It is a magnificent example of Victorian architecture with neo-oriental turrets all over the place. I am impressed. Who can this lady be who lives in this house? The house overlooks the Marshwood Vale and in the valley directly below lies Haughton, about a mile and a half away. In a way, the position of the house is symbolic of the lady's position in the community, high and dominant. I ring an elaborate bell. Mrs.Kennerly answers the door and from here on in the next thirty minutes belong to her.

She takes me though an impressive hall, full of large portraits, and on into a long high room which is dominated by a magnificent oak dining table. The wooden floor is covered centrally by a carpet, a delicate shade of blue. At the southern end of the room Elizabethan style French windows open on to a patio which looks over the Vale and on towards the English Channel. Mrs.Kennerly asks me to sit down, offers me a cup of coffee, which I gratefully accept, and then pulls out some papers from a desk which stands at the side of the room. She uses this dining room as a sort of office: "It's very bright in here and the views are magnificent." She immediately asks me to give her a few more details about the project I am planning. When I telephoned her to fix an appointment I had mentioned the fact that I worked for the Local Education Authority and that one or two people in the area (the Haughton area that is) had thought the idea of a one night a week youth club quite interesting. I explained my plans in greater detail: the youth club would be for all age groups, to start with at any rate, and operate on Tuesday nights (the only night I was free to do any work outside my own youth centre in Bridport). I would be hoping to organise trips and camping weekends and visits to other youth clubs. I would also be trying to recruit helpers, local people (hopefully), and put on one or two training weekends for their benefit. We would also need some sort of management committee to help look after the administration, most of which could be done from my office in Bridport. We would certainly need a treasurer. Generally, I saw the youth club as a place where young people could go one night a week and just talk or play games; maybe listen to some music. It would be an experiment, certainly for the first twelve months. After that we would review the situation. I would hope to start something before Easter but, failing that, it would have to wait until the autumn.

She listens intently, and is obviously extremely interested in what I have to say:

> "I think it's a jolly good idea (I breathe a sigh of relief). My father did a tremendous amount of work with the Scouts you know. There used to be a scout troop in Haughton, but that was just after the First World War. The youngsters haven't really had anything organised for them for years. The church used to be active when I was a girl, and of course we had a village school then. It was a disappointment that we lost the school but there you are, too expensive, not enough children. It had to go really. Now let me see, Tuesday night you say." (She consults some sort of lettings book). "Well the W.I. have their bingo night in the village hall the third Tuesday in every month. That is a permanent

booking, so if your youth club, or whatever it is, is on a Tuesday you would only be able to operate three evenings a month." (That's better than nothing, and perhaps we could change evenings when the bingo is on?) "Yes, but not to a Wednesday. Wednesday night is skittle night, not every Wednesday, but every other Wednesday. But I would stay clear of Wednesdays if I were you." (There is no way I am not going to take this lady's advice.) "Now, rent for the village hall." (She delves into the desk again and comes out with a leaflet). "We had this printed, it gives you all the information you need about charges and seating and things like that. Of course we might consider some sort of special rate for the youth club, but it will have to pay its way whatever happens." (I glance at the leaflet. The charges are quite reasonable but will take some finding if the membership is very low, and this is a possibility. I tell Mrs.Kennerly that grant aid from the L.E.A. might be available. She says that if I start to run the youth club, finding the rent will be my problem, not her's. Does she happen to know how many young people live in the parish?) ...."As a matter of fact I do. Last year I made a list of all the under sixteens. We were giving out Jubilee Crowns and Mugs you see." (This is a stroke of luck. Mrs.Kennerly is back into the desk and brings out another book. In it she has identified thirty five families and forty eight children between the ages of ten and sixteen. However, about four or five, including her own fifteen year old son, are away at boarding school. One family, the Colemans, are Jehovah's Witness' and unlikely to join in any youth club activities. There are three children in this family and none of them attended the Christmas Party which Mr.Dalby had mentioned earlier. Also, quite a few of the children live a fair distance away from the village hall. In fact about twenty of them live in isolated cottages up to three miles away from the centre of Haughton. We identify twenty children living in the village. This group I see as being the core of the youth club membership. If we cannot attract these youngsters, then the ones living a couple of miles away are unlikely to make the journey into Haughton on a Tuesday night, particularly in winter, when they will probably rely on their parents to bring them in. Nevertheless, the picture is quite promising and Mrs.Kennerly gives me a copy of the names and addresses. Now, what about helpers?) .... "Mr.Kitson is the man to see about this. He really is the driving force as far as the youngsters are concerned. His wife is a wonderful woman, she will gladly help I'm sure. There's a Mr.Cozens who lives close to the village hall. He's very good with his hands. He might help you out. He also has children who would probably go to the youth club. I can't really think of anybody else off hand, but if you get Mr.Kitson he'll give you all the help you'll need.

He's a tremendous worker."..... (What about this teacher who lives in the village? And what about Mr.Dalby, would he be a representative on a management committee?)"...... .. No, I don't think it would be a good thing to ask Mr.Stott (the teacher). His wife has just had a baby and he works very hard during the day. I don't think we should ask him at all. The Dalby's are alright, but they're very very dull. You won't get much from them. I know a good few people who are far livelier than the Dalby's. You leave the management committee problem with me. I'll find a few good sorts. The important thing to remember is this, there are a lot of older people in the village. They want peace and quiet, and so I hope you don't intend holding any of those dreadful 'discos' or whatever they are. And I don't want children chasing about all over the place wrecking furniture and things. If there's any damage I'll stop the youth club. So not too much noise and no damage and everything will be fine. I suggest you see Mr.Kitson and perhaps one or two of the other fathers, and I'll see the Hall Committee and tell them what's going on."

With that, the 'audience' was concluded. It had been an experience worth waiting for. Mrs.Kennerly is as bright as a button and Dalby was right, she has an extremely domineering personality. This has much to do with her breeding and background. Her father, Colonel Peters, was very much the country landlord. The family, with their wealth and property simply dominated the area, and although the estate is nowhere near as large as it used to be, Mrs.Kennerly still commands great respect. She has money and can give the labourers much rewarding work. She has property and can fix people up with accommodation. However, even Mrs.Kennerly would appear to be 'feeling the pinch'. Maintaining only a small estate is expensive, and where she can make savings, she does. I believe Mr.Kitson does a tremendous amount of work for her. She knew him and his family very well, and my guess is that Kitson does regular work in return for a roof over his head. She has no paid servants these days, but from what Mrs.Kitson said it seems that a few women from the village are always going up to Hillside House, "doing the odd job 'ere and there". I believe Mrs.Kennerly is central to the local 'hidden economy'. She knows very well what many of the farmers and labourers get up to, but if it saves her money she is quite happy for transactions to by-pass the 'books'. She is a forthright woman, a woman who is likely to keep her word. She realises of course that by helping to set up a small youth club she will grow even more in stature as far as the local villagers are concerned. The labourers are the people she obviously wants to keep happy. The retired people, like the Dalby's, she has no time for, this was most apparent. She dismissed their involvement with a wave of the hand. She was also keen that any youth club in the area should be based in Haughton, she stressed this on a number of occasions. At a later date I was talking to the Rector of

Whitchurch Parish. He told me that there always had been great rivalry between Whitchurch and Haughton, and that if I was to set up a youth club in Haughton somebody would probably do the same in Whitchurch. He found the whole situation quite amusing.

I have introduced you briefly to three families who live in a Marshwood Vale village. In the way they live they are all completely different, but interact with each other continuously in the course of their everyday lives. The labourer, using his brawn and wits to scratch a living from the land. The retired couple, clinging on to the past, lacking the energy to move forward with determination or ideas but overwhelming the social system with their growing numbers. And, finally, the old Squirearchy, dominating the whole scene with wealth and power. Adolescents in West Dorset must cope with this social system as best they can. In a way, the system described excludes young people from it quite deliberately. Only the labourer seems concerned about drawing in the youngsters for the youngsters' sake. The retired couple can do little to help, even if they wanted to, and the landowner 'holds all the aces', the power to initiate and the power to suspend. Any moves by the old Squirearchy are calculated and measured. Young people can cause problems. Landowners do not like problems, neither do retired couples, and as long as this sort of rigid social system exists unchallenged, young people in rural areas will fail to be provided with the natural outlets for adolescent expression. The next part of this chapter examines the type of adolescence some young people in West Dorset endure.

PART II

IMAGES OF RURAL YOUTH

The following descriptions are based on three sources of information: (1) a manual analysis of 1024 questionnaires, (2) formal, though somewhat unstructured interviews(1) and, (3) participant observation in the field. In effect the text reflects a triangulated attack on what is essentially an on-going piece of action (put simply, the behaviour of young people in West Dorset). In doing so I have, hopefully, raised the quality of the thesis above the level of pure descriptive journalism and to a certain extent negated the problem of impressionistic bias; two faults, both of which can filter through interpretations from an interactionists stance. However, before considering the main issues I will offer some thoughts on the concept of adolescence generally and also a brief [illegible]tline of the sociological model upon which the key concer[illegible] and general descriptions have been hung.

ADOLESCENCE: a general statement

As a whole, young people are an extremely complex group to study; they never seem to stand still long enough for anyone to catch and hold on to the essence of their social psychology. This is not surprising, for as many studies point out, adolescence is a sort of passing phase both crucial and critical, a time for self-searching, a period full of public protests and riddled with rapid change. It is approached and passed through at a frightening pace yet plays a vital part in the general process of socialization which leads, ideally, to a state commonly known as adulthood, or better still, maturity. As a concept adolescence has little to do with age, but more with a state of mind, a state of being. It has something to do with 'growing up'; with 'coming to terms with'; with 'emancipation'; with 'looking for support'; with 'independence'. Fortunately most people pass through adolescence relatively unscathed; but there are some, a minority, who never make it. Some young people will barely enter adolescence whilst others hardly ever leave the state, and for a few the journey will be ferocious and traumatic, too traumatic. For these people the prospects of being labelled socially deviant and spending time in some kind of corrective institution are high.

For the individual, adolescence is also endowed with two particular and peculiar qualities: retrospection and invisibility. In the first place it is often a period in time REFLECTED UPON rather than REACTED TO or experienced positively as a separate position in its own right. Thus, for some youngsters the social constraints and barriers surrounding adolescence become a kind of psychological prison from which they are constantly trying to break out. It is often only in retrospect that the experience of adolescence is appreciated or understood. Secondly, adolescence creeps silently and invisibly upon a person. It is rare for youngsters to wake up one morning and shout, "Today I am an adolescent"; a teenager maybe, but not an adolescent. In a way, individuals rarely witness the emergence of their own adolescence, but they nearly always notice it has vanished. There are exceptions. Indeed, as a youth worker I have come upon countless youngsters who have been fully conscious of their adolescence and have used the knowledge skilfully in a multitude of strategically beneficial ways. But this situation only adds to the dilemma of containing and analysing the quality of adolescence. It possesses different youngsters in different ways, at different times, and adolescent youth will often exhibit a barrage of varying traits or signals almost simultaneously. For me adolescence is a highly individualistic state of being, and variable to boot. The adolescent is a complex 'beast'; volatile; impressionable; resourceful; simple; delicate; frustrating, and so on and so forth. Indeed, I find it doubtful that the sum total of all known adjectives would adequately describe this 'transitory type', this youth caught in limbo somewhere between childhood and adulthood. But some things are certain, adolescence is indelible, it cannot be changed, it is within us and will remain with us, always.

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(1) A 'blow-by-blow' analysis of the questionnaires may be located in the next chapter.

But how do these vague notions and ideas of adolescence relate to young people living in West Dorset? And which set of concepts has been used to try and describe the way in which these youngsters pass through their adolescence? And how does this state of being, this adolescence, relate to the social system as a whole? In other words, how do young people living in West Dorset regard themselves as participants or actors in the ongoing interactions of everyday life, and further more, how does this regard, this attitude, manifest itself in terms of either overt or covert action? Indeed, what are the hallmarks of rural youth in West Dorset? To help me consider some of these problems I have sought succour in the methods and language of the Symbolic Interactionists; which, in a way, is ironic, in so much as interactionism may be considered a child or product of American Urbanism - a far cry from English Ruralism.

THE ADOLESCENT IN WEST DORSET: some general features

14 year old girl
lives on a farm just outside Symondsbury

"I go to the Girl Guides once a week and Saturday mornings I usually go into Bridport and have dancing lessons. 'Tap' on Saturdays and 'Ballroom' on Monday evenings, if I can get into Bridport that is. Most of the time I just stay at home. Sometimes I get bored so I go and help my father on the farm. Then I go back home and watch T.V. for a while, then go back to help father again. It's not too bad around here. I don't care much, I'm not really bothered about youth clubs or things like that. I'll probably stay around here when I leave school, get some sort of job in Bridport perhaps. I don't know, I'll just have to see what happens. I shouldn't think I'll go to University or anything. I'm not really interested in school work."

Do you like living in this area, Symondsbury?

"Yes. I don't think I'd like living in the town."

THE ADOLESCENTS OF WEST DORSET ARE NO MORE OR LESS COMPLEX IN CHARACTER THAN ANY OTHER ADOLESCENTS: BUT THEY ARE OF A DIFFERENT TYPE. Because of the complexities of adolescence as a concept and the adolescent as a social phenomenon, any analysis is eased considerably by breaking down the whole into a series of significant parts. Broadly speaking there are two main types of adolescent: those who assume roles of PROTEST and those who follow what might be loosely termed CONVENTIONAL patterns of transition. In the main, those youngsters occupying positions of protest enter one of three mainstream fraternities, namely, the Delinquents, the Bohemians or the Radicals. These three types have at least one thing in common; they each possess a public face, they all promote a public image. Conventional adolescence is less dramatic, just as complex, but perhaps more private. However, if we accept the idea that any individual youth may occupy multiple positions, either separately or simultaneously, as he passes through his adolescence, it seems important to realise that any descriptions of a particular type of adolescent or of a role within a type (for example: the 'PUNK' as being a 'RADICAL') is only a description of an ascribed social position, a social role, and not necessarily the person within it. Roles, or types, may assume an existence as part of a social system distinct from the interactions of people. However, as it is difficult to respond to other persons in all their unique individuality (and often more difficult to study them) culturally provided categories, types, are a useful tool in the generation of ideas regarding particular groups. After all, individuals continually use the typifications of others as frames of reference when constructing their own reality of existence within the social systems of which they, and others, are a part:

14 year old boy from Stoke Abbot

"From what I've 'eard about Beaminster Youth Club I don't think I'd want to go anyway, even if I could get there. They're all yobs who go there .... they just p around the streets on mopeds..."

Warden of Beaminster Youth Centre:

"Everybody in Beaminster is always going on about the Bridport 'Greasers'.(1) None of the kids in my youth centre relish the thought of going over to the club at Bridport ..... I don't know, it has a lot to do with history. There's always been rivalry between the two towns - the football teams and cricket teams and the schools. I've never seen any 'Greasers' in Bridport, well only one or two and I think they came from Beaminster."

16 year old boy from Bridport:

"The only good thing about Beaminster is the main road back to Bridport. Beaminster B , that's what we call 'em....."

A second generalised statement concerning the West Dorset adolescent may well be, that whilst there are individual exceptions to the rule: THE YOUTH OF WEST DORSET DO NOT EXHIBIT, PUBLICLY, CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH PROTEST TYPES. DELINQUENTS, BOHEMIANS AND RADICALS ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. This statement is based on observations following an initial gut reaction early on in the research, and I contend it to be essentially true. However, from this basic observation I assumed that West Dorset youngsters generally experience a pretty conventional adolescence and this assumption was reinforced by the fact that instances of distinctive overt behaviour (as witnessed in that of certain protest types, Hooligans for instance) or interesting simple differentiating items such as appearance or tastes in music (consider Rastafarians) are practically non-existent. A whole youth subculture, namely that of the West Dorset adolescent, seemed devoid of 'personality' and there appeared to be very little one could say except that they are a normal, ordinary, respectful almost deferential group of youngsters who rarely speak, and when they do say little. Their whole adolescence seemed to lack substance, seemed thin, transparent, characterless; but I was wrong. For the longer I studied, and the more I applied myself to an analysis of the data, the more I became aware of a rural social system in which ADOLESCENCE, FOR WEST DORSET YOUTH, IS AN UNUSUALLY PRIVATE AFFAIR. IT IS ALSO FAR FROM CONVENTIONAL.

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(1) 'Greasers': (sometimes known as 'Bikers' or 'Greabo's' [Grease boys]). Greasers are normally adolescents (16+) who wear either old leather or filthy denim jackets and ride motorcycles rather badly. They normally have longish hair and may be regarded as sort of trainee 'Hells Angels', though they are normally non-violent (unless drunk) and are heavily into 'flesh', carburettors and cannabis.

15 year old girl
Lives in Puncknowle. Father is a farm worker, mother a housewife.

"There are no clubs or organisations round here. The nearest is in Bridport. I do a lot of writing. I've got 'pen pals' and I write to them, and I do quite a bit of reading. I like horse riding, but I don't get a chance to do it these days. I used to go to the stables at Burton Bradstock, but it got a bit too much trying to get over there.

Every evening is the same: I come in and have my tea and then we go for a walk around the village. Then I come in and do my homework, watch T.V. and then go to bed. On Saturdays I stay at home and help mum around the house, and in the afternoons I see my friend. We usually just walk around the village, just talking, or I might go down and help dad on the farm. It's the same on Sundays. If my dad can take me into Bridport I sometimes go to a Disco on Friday nights, but that's not very often. I can't remember the last time I went to a disco.

It wouldn't be too bad if there was a bus or something into Bridport. There used to be one on Saturday mornings but they stopped it. I used to be able to get into Bridport when they had the bus and do some shopping. There are lots of little villages dotted around close by. If there was a youth club I think people would use it. I would anyway.

I don't know what I'll do when I leave school next year. I like looking after children, I do quite a bit of baby sitting, but I'll probably need to go to the Technical College at Weymouth. I'm not really sure. If I could move away from here I would, but I don't know what my chances are. I've hardly ever been out of this area. When dad's on holiday we sometimes go to Bristol, but that's about all really. The countryside is alright, it's very nice, but it's sort of boring. There's nothing to do, it never changes. If there was just something, anything, a small youth club where you could play badminton or table tennis and have a record player and just go there to meet your friends. Have a good time once in a while. It's not too bad in Bridport, there's the cinema and discos, but there should be more for the people in villages, people who can't get into Bridport ....."

Furthermore, in so much as the 'vehicles' for the public expression of adolescence pass through the area only occasionally, the privacy of an individual's experience of adolescence can deepen over time. This results in some youngsters withdrawing their adolescent statements completely from the common eye. This is a general statement and certainly there are a few individuals and groups with public voices, adolescent protesters; but there are others, again small in number, abnormal by their silence and seemingly totally withdrawn from the social ambience of everyday life. Not that they are withdrawn in any sort of psychologically disturbed way, rather it is the public face of their adolescence which is hidden. In effect YOUTH CULTURE, ADOLESCENCE, OCCUPIES A RELATIVELY WEAK POSITION IN MANY WEST DORSET COMMUNITIES. ADOLESCENCE MAY BE THOUGHT OF AS BEING SOCIALLY DORMANT AND, COMPARED TO AN URBAN TYPE, LACKING IN SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL IMPACT.

In between the 'DORMANT' few and even less 'PROTESTERS' we find an 'INERT' majority. As a group this large proportion of adolescents seem to lack the inherent powers of action or motion or resistance normally associated with youth subcultures. There is, admittedly, a wide range of expression amongst these youngsters, but generally speaking THE TREND TOWARDS A STATE OF DORMANCY IS STRONG, PARTICULARLY FOR POORER CHILDREN LIVING IN SMALL, ISOLATED PARISHES WITH DISINTEGRATING SOCIAL SYSTEMS. UNLESS SOMEONE, OR SOMETHING, AWAKENS THEM MANY OF THE ADOLESCENTS IN WEST DORSET WILL CONTINUE ALONG THE INELUCTABLE ROAD TO NOWHERE.

13 year old boy.
Lives in a village in Netherbury. Father is a builder and painter. Mother is a housewife.

Q. Do you belong to any club or team in the area?

A. No.

Q. Are there any in Netherbury?

A. No, there was a Youth Club, but it closed down.

Q. Did you used to go there?

A. Yes.

Q. And you liked it there?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you do in your spare time?

A. I usually just stay in and read books and watch T.V.

Q. Do you go into Bridport or Beaminster at weekends?

A. No.

Q. Would you like there to be facilities for you to do more things?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of things would you like to be able to do?

A. Go to the Youth Club.

Q. Anything else you'd like to do?

A. No.

Q. If there was transport provided to go to Beaminster Youth Club would you like to go there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know anyone who goes there?

A. No.

Q. Do you get bored in the evenings in the winter?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think a Youth Club would help that?

A. Yes.

Q. Any ideas what you'll do when you leave school?

A. No.

Q. Would you like to stay in this area or would you like to go to a big town or city?

A. Stay around here.

Q. Do you travel around this area much to Bournemouth or Exeter for instance?

A. No, we go to Bournemouth occasionally.

Q. You think you'd prefer to live around here rather than in Bournemouth?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there anything else that ought to be provided for people your age here?

A. No, not really.

At this stage it is well worth recalling the social settings in which many adolescents in West Dorset find themselves. To describe these social settings in their entirety, I have on a number of occasions used the word DISINTEGRATING. However, it would be wrong of me to say that the whole of the area is experiencing social decline, there are clearly pockets of vitality, particularly in the larger villages and towns. But there are many parishes showing signs of severe social disfunction: depopulation, outward migration of young people, inbalance in population structure, poor or no transport systems, no school, no post office or local pub, lack of social activity, run-down village halls, social inertia, few local employment opportunities and so on. For the people, including the adolescents, these symptoms amount to a social condition which I can only describe as ANOMIC. Under normal circumstances (that is, urban circumstances) a condition of anomie might very well be expected to create, within groups and individuals, pressures leading to the violation of social norms with the aim of achieving social change. In some West Dorset villages this is not the case, and probably for two reasons. In the first place rural decline festers slowly. It is not violently obvious or sudden in its attack, but like a cancer can eat at the heart of a rural social system almost undetected. It means, in effect, that those people living in some West Dorset villages, and in particular the adolescents, rarely feel the effects of social disfunction, or anomie, with anything like the force needed to shock them into some kind of mass movement towards change, towards a common search for alternatives. Secondly, adolescents growing up in these 'anomic' communities are, in a way, starved of social ammunition. They do not possess the inner resources to even consider, let alone activate radical social change. Indeed, the way many young people regard themselves (which to a certain extent merely reflects the way others regard them) appears almost deterministic; the nature of their self concept does not allow for violation of the status quo. Deference can breed deference. People, especially children, are easily mistaken into thinking that their station in life is tied to history, as their house is tied to the land, and the way 'it was' is often interpreted to mean the 'way it always shall be'.

Communities displaying signs of latent anomie may produce in individuals signs of latent alienation, and of the West Dorset adolescent we may state that WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENT OF THEIR RURAL SOCIAL SYSTEMS, MANY YOUNG PEOPLE OF WEST DORSET WILL AT SOME STAGE OF THEIR ADOLESCENCE EXPERIENCE EITHER SOCIAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ALIENATION FROM THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY LIVE. THIS ALIENATION IS VARIABLE IN INTENSITY FROM PERSON TO PERSON, TIME TO TIME: BUT IT IS ALWAYS PRESENT IN A NUMBER OF OBSERVABLE FORMS.

15 year old boy.
Lives in Puncknowle. Father a fisherman at Abbotsbury.

Q. Do you belong to any club or organisation?

A. No.

Q. Are there any in your area?

A. There's a football team down Burton Bradstock.
I don't play football.

Q. What do you usually do with your spare time in the evenings and at weekends?

A. Just p   around.

Q. Do you usually go outside the village or stay at home?

A. Go outside around the village and meet some friends.

Q. What about weekends?

A. Just the same really. Just p   around.

Q. Do you come into Bridport?

A. No.

Q. If there is anything in Bridport you want to get in for can you get a bus?

A. I suppose I can, I don't know if there is one or not.

Q. Do you get bored in the evenings?

A. Yes, sometimes.

Q. Would you like there to be some sort of club in the village if it was just one night a week or so?

A. I suppose so. I don't really know. I don't really care.

Q. What will you do when you leave school?

A. I'll probably work with Dad.

Q. Do you like living here?

A. Yes, it's alright I suppose.

Q. Do you go out of the area much?

A. Yes, on holiday we go to France.

Q. There's nothing you'd like to see provided in Bridport for people your age?

A. No, not really.

Q. You're quite happy with your life generally?

A. Yes. No. I don't know. I don't really care. Why are you asking me all these stupid questions. Nothing's going to change around here. Nobody gives a f about me or anybody. There's nothing but old folks around here. I leave school next year and I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm just really p off....."

ALIENATION IN THE RURAL SETTING

If communities in West Dorset are slow in reacting to mounting social anomie, then individuals appear equally ineffective at combating psychological alienation. For the West Dorset youth the inner pressures of personal alienation rarely manifest themselves publicly, by way of (say) gross anti-social behaviour or deviant behaviour generally for that matter. In some way this is perhaps contrary to general theories of alienation and the social reactions produced as a consequence; but then alienation is normally considered in terms or urban situations, not rural. The reasons for this are mainly political. If people, including adolescents, are unable to achieve socially accepted goals legitimately they often resort to illegitimate tactics. They become, if you like, anti-social in their regard for the normal conventions of everyday life. Anti-social behaviour in the urban area, particularly in the inner city or 'ghetto', has a habit of becoming far more problematic nationally, and therefore politically, than similar behaviour in a rural setting. The result is that the problems of urban living receive more attention (including social research) than the problems attached to rural life. But going back to my original contention; the notion that social anomie at the subcultural level is accompanied by alienation of the personality, and that both are related to social deviancy as a public expression, does not seem to hold good as far as West Dorset adolescents are concerned. Some observations on this situation are perhaps in order.

In the first place, deviant or anti-social behaviour in an urban setting assumes a dynamic group quality far quicker than in the rural area, mainly because communication systems are both more accessible and sophisticated. Secondly, as opposed to the rural adolescent, the urban youth has more opportunity to witness at first hand instances of what he might regard as gross social injustice or social inequality. The urban youth often feels more hard done by than his rural counterpart and generally speaking, aspires more openly to a middle class materialism. This aspiration often acts as a key motivator in the illegitimate pursuit of socially accepted goals. The rural youth, on the other hand, would appear to accept more readily his 'inherited' position within the social hierarchy. This smacks of "what you've never had, you never miss". Urban adolescents, however, take the view that "what we've never had is all around, and we'd like a piece of the action". Indeed, it may very well be true that the aspirations of rural adolescents are, in a way, lower than those of urban types; but their NEEDS are just as great. Thirdly, as touched on earlier, rural youngsters lack many of the inner resources of mind which would allow them to activate ideas concerning social change, if indeed they have any ideas in the first place. Conversely, the urban youth has many ideas, or at least has access to people with ideas of change, and is also well placed to activate these ideas. This does not mean that the rural youth is less resourceful generally, as a human being, but only politically. Fourthly, in the case of rural youth, their demographic disposition (low in numbers with a trend towards outward migration) and geographic location (windespread and random) ruptures any large scale, and often small scale, public expression of psychological alienation. Also COMPARED WITH THEIR URBAN COUNTERPARTS, THE ADOLESCENTS OF WEST DORSET ARE INHIBITED (CULTURALLY, SOCIALLY AND POLITICALLY) BY THE LACK OF NATURAL AND REGULAR INFORMAL GROUP ENCOUNTERS.

And this is quite important, for as a result, any symptoms or signs of social alienation tend to work inwards, within the individual, rather than outwards, through groups, as part of an adolescent social statement or social challenge. For West Dorset youth, alienation is a subtle sickness.

In effect, although the symptoms are relatively similar, the outward manifestations of social/psychological alienation would appear to be somewhat different for rural youth compared to those of urban adolescents. But what of the symptoms?

As the research progressed it became clear that a considerable number of young people with whom I made contact took certain lines of action which are, in my view, symbolic of the way in which they regard both themselves and the rural social system as a whole. On balance, these lines of action fell reasonably well into Seeman's (1959) conceptual framework of psychological alienation. In effect, we can say that A GOOD MANY ADOLESCENTS IN WEST DORSET REFLECT UPON THEMSELVES AND THEIR SOCIAL POSITION IN THE AREA FROM A RELATIVELY ALIENATED STANCE. THESE SUBTLE FEELINGS OF ALIENATION MAY BE ANALYSED ALONG FIVE DIMENSIONS OF EXPERIENCE: POWERLESSNESS, MEANINGLESSNESS, SOCIAL ISOLATION, NORMLESSNESS AND SELF-ESTRANGEMENT.

(A) POWERLESSNESS

This is probably the most clearly observable symptom of alienation amongst young people in West Dorset. The idea of powerlessness refers to a situation in which a person realizes that he is unable to influence his own destiny in the social system to which he belongs. In a small community, such as Haughton for example, where one can find rigid and somewhat disintegrating social systems, the probability that a young person can influence the satisfaction of his needs is low. These needs, and the feeling of powerlessness to influence their satisfaction, may be identified at five basic levels:

(i) Powerlessness at the Social Level

For many adolescents in West Dorset the constraints of the rural situation severely restricts their ability to engage in meaningful social interaction. In this particular instance I assume social interaction to be activity engaged in outside work or school or, in some cases, the home. I am talking specifically about leisure pursuits; meeting people socially.

Outside the three main towns, which are relatively well endowed with clubs and organisations, one of the main problems facing young people is the lack of social meeting places. A survey carried out in 1978 (see next chapter) highlighted an acute shortage of youth clubs in the rural villages and even traditional groups, such as the Scouts and Guides, (uniformed organisations in general), are thin on the ground. In effect, young people must be prepared to travel in order to meet other young people, and this is not always possible. Adolescents are often found relying on their parents or friends to ferry them around in cars from one place to another and this, in some ways, reduces their sense of independence, particularly in the case of the older adolescent. Also, relying on other people (even their parents) often means that youngsters are unable to make their own arrangements in connection with (say) attending a social event. The decision making process is contingent upon the behaviour of others. This situation can often dampen the confidence of an individual, especially if the fulfilment of a pre-arranged line of action ("I'll see you tonight at the youth club") is thwarted through lack of co-operation on the part of some other person. A reduced sense of independence and a loss of status in the decision making process preludes the feeling of powerlessness at the social level.

The feeling of powerlessness becomes consolidated over a period of time due to a number of related factors. For a start, an adolescent living in a small community may find himself very much alone. He or she may well be the only fifteen or sixteen year old in the village and day to day encounters become dominated by a lack of peers. True, adolescents still at school will have the opportunity of seeing their friends daily (within the confines of the institution), but to a certain extent, the inability to carry on an association in the evenings or at weekends, possibly the times when friends are needed most, merely frustrates the adolescent and irradicates his sense of social isolation. Having few or no local friends of his own age to talk to and be with, the adolescent may feel a misguided sense of failure and think himself incapable of developing solid personal relationships. Infrequent meetings in an informal setting often result in the adolescent becoming socially inept, with peer groups at any rate. In the end these different factors (few social organisations, no transport and the lack of independence, lack of confidence in making decisions, few friends, a feeling of failure and a certain social ineptness) all combine to produce an overall feeling of powerlessness at the social level. Unable to wrench themselves out of this situation, many young people in West Dorset villages simply endure chronic boredom. Examples are innumerable:

15 year old girl.
Lives in Symondsbury.

"You have to walk to the bus stop at the corner, that's about a mile and a half away and the bus is always late. It's such a bother I just don't do it very often ..... I go to the pictures (at Bridport) when there's a good film on but I usually have to walk all the way home in the dark and I don't like that. You never know if there's a maniac on the loose or somebody, and there's always drunken holiday makers peeing in the bushes. The road which I walk along is full of badgers. They hide in the hedges and wait for you to walk past. I'll only walk back if I'm with a friend, and that's not very often. I've never been to the youth club in Bridport. I can't get there."

15 year old girl.
Lives in Netherbury.

"There isn't any live music in Dorchester or anywhere round here. I've been to two concerts in Bournemouth and my father had to take us. They didn't finish until after twelve. There's no way to get back. The train only goes as far as Dorchester and then you have to be picked up ....."

15 year old boy.
Lives in Stoke Abbot.

> "I used to go to Beaminster Youth Club, but not very often. We haven't got anywhere in our village .... .. I used to cycle about three miles into Beaminster, even in the dark. I was a bit frightened ...."

Would you like to go out more in the evenings?

> "Yes I would ..... I'd like to go to discos and things like that. But it's no use. The only regular place with discos is Bridport, but that's seven miles for me and there are no buses. I've no real friends in Bridport so I can't stay with anybody and a taxi's too expensive. I've no chance."

One fourteen year old girl living in Thorncombe was quite happy with her situation. Her social life was quite active, thanks to her parents. They took her to the Youth Orchestra in Bridport (15 miles), to the cinema quite regularly in Crewkerne (Somerset), about once a fortnight, school discos in Lyme Regis (about four a year) and shopping to Yeovil or Taunton on Saturdays. This girl was extremely lucky in having co-operative parents who could afford the time and expense to undertake such journeys. However, this girl was still unhappy with some things:

> "I'd really like to live in a town. It's all there then - you don't have to travel miles to do things. Mum and dad take me out a lot but I can't nip round the corner and see my friends when I want to. They're dotted all over the place. I can only see them at school, unless it's a special occasion or something ......"

17 year old boy.
Lives in Stoke Abbot. (Recently moved in).

> "There aren't many young people my age in Stoke Abbot. I don't think there's anybody. It's mainly fourteen year olds and under .... There aren't really all that many people my age in Beaminster or anywhere round here. It's not as good in Stoke Abbot as White Parish. I lived there nearly all my life and I liked it better."

Was it a bigger place?

> "I don't know about bigger, I just knew more people there. There were more people my age ...."

14 year old girl.
Lives in Netherbury. (Recently moved in from London).

"Most weekends I go down to my friends in Drimpton, that's if somebody takes me. We just walk around the village. There's nothing in Drimpton but less in Netherbury ..... I don't do much after school. I stay at home. I miss London. We go back every now and then to see my aunty. There's so much more going on in London ...."

14 year old boy.
Lives in Wootton Fitzpaine.

"Most of the time I don't do anything ..... At night I have to stay in ..... I can't get to Bridport, it's too far away, and there's nothing to do in Wootton. I do nothing.

15 year old girl.
Lives in Symondsbury.

There's nothing to do in Symondsbury except wander round the village, and that's not particularly interesting ..... There's only one thing I'm really interested in and that's horses ..... If I didn't have horses I'd be really bored and wouldn't know what to do with myself. It's O.K. in the summer holidays, there's enough to do then. It's just in term time. You can't go riding at night because it's too dark. If there was a youth club you could go there.

From my observations and interviews it became evident that children living on farms were less likely to show symptoms of powerlessness, they are kept quite busy. Also one or two individuals did show some signs of enterprise in their pursuit of meaningful activities. One group of about eight younger adolescents from Netherbury had got together to organise a football team. They had gained permission from a local senior club to use equipment and a football field and played the occasional match against other villages. By way of contrast, the local youngsters in Symondsbury had to stop playing soccer when the headmaster of the primary school banned them from using the school field (something to do with the drainage, I think) and there was a youth club in Netherbury but it had to close because of lack of leadership. The same as Litton Cheney youth club and Drimpton youth club.

5th year girl.
Lives in Puncknowle. Mother a housewife, father works in Yeovil (Westlands).

Q. Do you belong to any club or organisation?

A. Well no, because there's none round here. It's hard getting into Bridport where there is one.

Q. What do you usually do in your spare time then?

A. Horse riding, when I can get into Burton Bradstock. Babysitting and just walking around the village. Mostly I stay at home, then go out for a bit and then go back and watch T.V.

Q. What about weekends?

A. I used to work, but not now. On Fridays I sometimes go to the Beehive (a social club in Bridport) but that's only very occasionally, when I can get in.

Q. Do you get a lift?

A. Yes, with my friend.

Q. Would you like a youth club in Puncknowle?

A. Yes. There aren't many children around here, but there are some in Swyre and Bexington, they might come in to a youth club. It wouldn't be too bad if there was some transport into Bridport ....

In so much that meeting people 'socially' is subject to certain pre-conditions, we may say that, in the rural setting, this type of interaction is CONTINGENT. The level of contingency involved relates directly to the extent of powerlessness experienced by an actor when organising his leisure time pursuits. In West Dorset, the level of contingency is high, in an urban area, for instance, the level of contingency is relatively low.

(ii) Powerlessness at the Educational Level.

This is perhaps not as critical a situation as powerlessness at the 'social' level, not in West Dorset anyway. Young people in the area are in a far better position than some of their counterparts living (say) in remote areas of Scotland: "Youngsters on several of the islands and along the West coast (of Scotland) who wish to pursue academic careers are forced to leave home in their mid-teens and live in school hostels many miles away. Once qualified, because there are few opportunities in sparsely populated areas, they move away. Have schools become responsible for the break up of family life ......"(1) However, in so much as some adolescents do encounter problems, particularly when they are older, or even adults, a brief consideration is relevant with regards to powerlessness at the educational level for young people in West Dorset. I am not, in this instance, talking about education from an achievement point of view. There is no evidence to suggest that the young people of West Dorset achieve, generally, higher or lower academic standards than young people living in towns or cities. I am not, therefore, referring to the quality of education available, but mainly to the physical problems of actually getting educated. And in this respect some young people in West Dorset are at a disadvantage. Also, the way a young person is educated may often be detrimental to the fabric of rural life.

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(1) Audrey Millan, Scottish Association of Youth Clubs: 1977 "Not so Rosy" Conference.

For example: from an early age a young person living in a village which has no school is forced to travel for his or her primary education. Later, when it is time for him to attend secondary school, even longer journeys may be encountered. If he or she does not go on to 'A' level work and then perhaps university (and few do) journeys to colleges of further education become extremely problematic. So much so that adolescents contemplating vocational courses may also have to contemplate moving from the village or town and into 'digs' in Weymouth or, even more so, Bournemouth (the main centre for education in Dorset). All in all a situation arises in which a young person must be continually adjusting his position, not only within the village, but also the whole of the West Dorset area. Adolescents must look outward from their rural setting in order to fix their educational horizons. From the word go, not just when they reach eighteen or nineteen (a time for going off to university), the young people in West Dorset must look to some other place in order to fulfil their educational aspirations. In towns and cities this is not the case, generally speaking that is. In urban areas educational establishments are often "on the doorstep" and an adolescent has much choice. Also, if a young person feels that when his time comes to leave school, or undertake special training, he will be unable to find employment locally, or that when he decides to get married will be unable to live in the village in which he was born, the incentive to travel to be educated is low. A young person is more likely to move away not only to receive further education, but also to build a new life for himself outside the area completely.

> 17 year old boy.
> Lives in Bridport. Father has a small electrical business.
>
> "I didn't do too well at school ..... my C.S.E. and 'O' level results were pretty poor. I managed to get a job as an apprentice electrician and I go to Weymouth Tech. once a week. Before I got the motor bike it was terrible. Sometimes I'd get a lift from a friend but once or twice he never turned up so I missed going. Catching the bus means getting up really early and I don't get back until late. It's expensive as well, although I do get some of that paid for. When the weather's fine I can go on my bike, but I don't enjoy

going in bad weather. It's twenty miles and by the time I get there I'm really knackered. It's not a very satisfactory arrangement. I mean this chap I work for might go bust any time. I can't work with my dad because he can't afford to pay me, I don't think I'd want to work with him anyway. I wanted to do art and technical drawing at 'O' level but the teachers said that wasn't allowed, I'm not sure why. I wanted to be a draughtsman but I've no chance. There's no jobs you see. If I lose this job, I don't know what I'll do ......"

16 year old girl.
Lives in Bridport.

"During the week I live in a hostel in Bournemouth. It's the only way I can do this two year hairdressing course. If I can't get a job in Bridport when I've finished I don't know what I'll do. I'll have to move away, that's for sure, or start my own business, but that's virtually impossible."

These two young people are particularly enterprising, they want to be educated and are doing something about it. They also see very clearly the problems confronting them, not only in terms of education, but also in terms of making use of their education once completed. There are many other young people, particularly those living in villages, who are just defeated by circumstances. The 1978 survey drew my attention to the fact that only 23% of youngsters living in villages were members of sports oriented clubs (the majority of which are school based). This compares with 40% living in the towns. In terms of extra curricula activities many young people in villages simply 'miss out'. If village life or home life cannot compensate for the loss of extra curricula activity at school a young person is likely to 'miss out' for good. But it is the way young people are constantly being asked to look beyond the village (and the area in general) to satisfy their educational needs which concerns me most. This starts with the closure of the village school:

"The effects on a village of the loss of its school begin of course with the children. Parents are worried about tiring journeys at both ends of the day, about a weakening of the children's ties with their home environment at a formative stage, about transport difficulties which are a disincentive to participating in out of school activities for both pupils and parents. However, beyond this the whole village community, both present and future, will feel the effect of a school closure. They will miss the hum of activity the school brings to the village. The mothers will lose the informal social focus of the school gate at the beginning and end of the school day. The whole village, and not just the parents, will miss school events that were as integral a part of the social calendar as church activities. In some villages the school will also have acted as the only meeting place and its closure may threaten the added loss of this vital community facility. Some communities are able to purchase the old school for adaption into a village hall, but others, like the case study village of Upottery in Devon, are not so lucky.

And even more important are the implications for the future population structure, as young families will choose to live in other villages which still have a school, and often planning authorities will allocate approvals for new housing or other development on the same basis. It is the link between the retention of the village school, with the attendant opportunities for natural growth of the community, and hope of maintaining a balanced age and social structure in the village, that makes this facility one of the most crucial." (1)

The very nature of the way in which some young people in West Dorset are educated not only alienates them physically from their villages and towns, but also psychologically. In many cases, young people are powerless to stop this process. It is not possible to have primary schools in every village or two or three more secondary schools built in the area or move technical colleges into West Dorset. This is not a practical answer. For me, the important issues revolve around (a) curriculum development at both Primary and Secondary levels and (b) motivating the sixteen plus group to at least consider further education as a possibility. As far as curriculum development is concerned, some re-alignment would seem a reasonable idea. At the moment a general 'work ethic' forms the base line of the curriculum, in other words the relationship between school and work after school predominates. What I am advocating here is a slight shift from this way of thinking and working, and more concentration on the relationship between school and the local environment, in particular the village culture. Young people need to have their attention focused inwards (to look at what is around them locally) rather than outwards, which is what is happening at the moment. With regards to motivating the sixteen plus group, I am talking primarily about 'selling' the uses of further education and providing some sort of special transport service, particularly for adolescents living in villages. However, until young people come to accept 'education' as an activity in itself, rather than a means to an end (in terms of job prospects or promotion or whatever), motivation in a broad sense will always be problematic in West Dorset. It seems important to me that young people in the area come to realize that the village, and its strength as a 'community', is a vital issue. This can only be achieved through some form of education, either formal (the statutory schools) or informal (perhaps the youth service or voluntary agencies or even the home). Of course the villages and towns have an important part to play in all this.

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(1) Standing Conference of Rural Community Councils: "The Decline of Rural Services", 1978.

(iii & iv) Powerlessness at the Employment and 'Home Building' Levels.

In as much as one's ability to find work (locally) often affects one's prospects of eventually 'building' a home and family life (locally) I will consider these two levels of powerlessness as experienced by West Dorset youth simultâneously.

If a young person in West Dorset is unable to find employment locally he can, in simple terms, take one of two lines of action: stay, and see what turns up, or leave, and search elsewhere. 90% of the young people I spoke to expressed a desire to stay in the area. Very few actually **WANTED** to leave. However, about 36% of those wanting to stay reckoned it inevitable that they would have to leave at sometime in order to find work or develop a career of some sort.

16 year old boy.
Lives in Stoke Abbot.

"I'd like to be a policeman when I leave school but that'll probably mean going away. I don't want to do that. I like it round here. There's not all that much going on but I get down to the farm every now and then and help dad. It's not too bad."

15 year old boy.
Lives close to Stoke Abbot.

"There's no one around here my age, but I haven't lived here all that long. I'd like to join the R.A.F. I don't mind having to go away. We've moved around all over the place. We lived in Australia for a few years. I won't mind moving away."

12 year old boy.
Lives in Stoke Abbot.

Q. Any ideas what you'll do when you leave school?

A. Anything to do with the police force or horses.

Q. Do you think you'll move away from this area, you might have to?

A. No, I don't want to do that.

Q. You like living in Stoke Abbot.

A. Yes, but if I've got to move I don't mind so long as it's in Dorset.

Q. Have you ever been out of Dorset?

A. No, we lived in Ireland for four months, but that was a long time ago.

Q. Have you been to any cities?

A. No, I sometimes go for a day out with my gran. I've been to Tiverton.....

16 year old boy.
Lives in Netherbury.

Q. What are you going to do when you leave school?

A. I'd like to go to college and be a farmer.

Q. Where will you go to college?

A. Kingston Warmwell. The other side of Dorchester.

Q. Do you think you'll stay in this area when you come out of college?

A. I don't know. I'd like to stay in Dorset but it depends on the work situation.

15 year old girl.
Lives in Beaminster.

Q. Any ideas what you'll do when you leave school?

A. I'd like to be a 'Wren'.(1) I don't know what else.

Q. Do you think you'll stay in this area or move away?

A. I'll probably move away.

Q. Is that because of the job or because you'd like to see other parts of England?

A. Both, but I'd really like to see other parts of England. I've never been anywhere really. I've never been to Bournemouth or Exeter. I'd love to see London. I don't think I'd like to live in a city though. I've been to Salisbury. I went there when I lived in Wiltshire. I've always lived in the country. You get used to it.

As the research progressed it became clear that of the two groups (those who felt they would have to go away and those who saw no alternative except to stay) the former were more likely to be higher qualified educationally and, hence, be more ambitious. They were also more likely to live in the towns. The other group were, on the whole, less ambitious and to the question, "What do you think you'll do when you leave school?" normally answered, "I don't know", or words to that effect. It is this latter group who are more likely to display symptoms of powerlessness and from this point of view may be regarded as being most at risk. Those youngsters contemplating a move are at least taking the initiative. Their migration from the area is not healthy, from West Dorset's point of view, but they seem determined to build a positive future for themselves even if it means leaving the area when their expressed desire is to stay. Those who remain are more likely to be less ambitious, less qualified, less motivated and less able to direct the pattern of their futures. They tend to take life very much 'as it comes' and it is fortunate that in West Dorset the overall pace of 'life' is extremely slow. Many of these young people, although seemingly quite happy to be living in villages or one of the small towns, have very little idea of either what they want to do or what the future might have in store for them. They also seem unconcerned. This is because there is little pressure on them to 'achieve'. They believe that many people do not expect much from them as adolescents in terms of performance, and this attitude has the overall effect of generally de-motivating them. I would need to do more research, but it seems to me that in an effort to 'blitz' themselves out of this insecurity, young people in West Dorset (particularly females) look towards early marriage as an answer to their problems.

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(1) 'Wren': Women's Royal Naval Service.

Of course, this line of action does little other than create other problems. For many young people in West Dorset buying a house is unthinkable. For example in 1976 the average price of a terraced house in the area was approximately £11,000. Today similar property is in the £16,000 plus bracket. Small semi-detached property will fetch anything over £25,000, an average price of £33,000 is not unrealistic. In comparison, property in the North of England (Greater Manchester) is considerably cheaper. In 1976 reasonable terraced properties could be bought for less than £2,000 (often less than £1,000). Good three-bedroomed terraced property could fetch £4,000 but then reasonable semi-detached accommodation could be obtained for less than £7,000. House prices in the North have risen dramatically since 1976, more so even than West Dorset, particularly the more desirable properties. Even so, a young person living in Greater Manchester would, generally speaking, have more chance of buying his own house than the adolescents of West Dorset. There are simply more properties on the market. Young people in West Dorset contemplating marriage must also contemplate the possibility of living with 'in-laws' or finding a 'flat' or 'bed-sit' somewhere locally. They would also contemplate council housing as a long term objective. However, the problems they must overcome often place adolescents in extremely marginal positions and from a community point of view they are very often caught 'on the outside looking in'. Feelings of powerlessness to overcome the problems of job finding and home building are a result:

17 year old girl.
Lives in Bridport.

"I couldn't get a job when I first left school. I did some shop work but that was only in the summer. Then I managed to get a Work Experience (1) job for six months. That wasn't too bad but the money was really poor. Still, Michael (her fiancé) did manage to save some money, and I saved a bit, and we decided to get married. We lived with Michael's parents for a while but that was pretty awful and now we've got this small flat along St.Michael's Road. The baby's due soon. We should be alright for a couple of years. Michael's got a steady job, he works for a local garage, but you can never tell. It's only a small firm. We've put our name down for a Council house but we'll have to wait. I don't think we'll ever own our own house, not in Bridport anyway."

17 year old girl.
Lives in Bridport.

"There's nothing for girls round here. I wanted to join the Wrens when I left school but I couldn't get in. Then I was out of work. At the moment I'm on a Government training scheme, working in a shop. It's the second Work Experience I've had. It's not too bad, I'm learning all about buying and selling jewellery. When I've finished I don't know what I'll do. I'll probably join the Army. There's not much future for me in the jewellery trade, not round here anyway."

17 year old boy.
Lives in Bridport.

"There's no work round here. It's really c . I've just packed in a job, painting and decorating. The boss was a b , a real b . He said if I worked all day Saturdays for him he'd give me some extra money. I've done four Saturdays on the trot and I haven't seen a penny yet. I told him he could stuff his job. I'm good at copying and I'd like to be a signwriter. I'd have to do my English, but even if I did what chance have I got as a signwriter in Bridport. There are about two or three in the town already, and that's two or three too many ......"

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(1) Work Experience: part of the Government's Youth Opportunity Programme.

17 year old boy.
Lives in Bridport.

> "I like it in Bridport, there's no hassle. I work for a firm in Weymouth and get picked up every morning. It's only labouring on the building site but it pays well. Mind you, if this bloke doesn't pick me up, that's it, no money. I've been working in Chippenham for the past month and we're off to Yeovil in a couple of weeks' time. There's no work in Bridport, no really. I'll never have a good job, I don't read or write very well. I've been thinking about going for these Adult Literacy lessons, but I'd feel a bit of an idiot. There's not many round here knows that I can't read very well and I'm supposed to be a bit of a hard case. If they knew I was going to learn reading my life wouldn't be worth living, everybody would take the p   out of me. I couldn't stand it. I think I'll move away, somewhere where people don't know me, and there's plenty work ...."

(v) Powerlessness at the Political Level

Although this is a particularly important issue it is an issue about which one can say very little. Adolescents in West Dorset are politically apathetic and take very little part in the running and organising of their community affairs. This probably reflects a general apathy in the population as a whole. Even in my own youth centre hardly any of the senior members were interested in taking a place on the management committee, and in Dorset it is a constitutional right of youth club members to be represented by at least two of their own kind on any such committee. In general conversations with young people the idea of involvement at the political level was hardly ever understood by the youngsters, let alone responded to positively.

15 year old boy.
Lives in Stoke Abbot.

Q. What about the village hall, could we start a youth club there?

A. I don't know. There's not much goes on in the village hall. It's always shut up. I don't know who uses it and I don't really care. There's nothing for me in Stoke Abbot.

Q. Do the youngsters ever get together round here? You know, do they ever join in and help out at the summer fêtes or organise special events?

A. No idea. It's mainly the old folks who does all that sort of thing. I've never seen any young people getting involved with anything like that.

This is a general pattern. In both villages and town the rural youth of the area seem far less politically aware than their urban counterparts. Very few of the young people I contacted, a mere handful out of hundreds, had any worthwhile knowledge about local Councillors or Parish Councils or Rural District Councils or Village Hall Committees. Furthermore, in villages especially, few people seem committed to furthering the 'cause' of youth. In the towns, and particularly Bridport, the efforts of powerful adult groups (local Councillors, Lions and Round Table(1)) were always in evidence, and their contributions to youth work must be applauded. In villages more work is needed, and for sure young people must be encouraged to participate in local community affairs. The 'caretaker' of one village hall summed up the situation quite well: "You don't think we's keepin' this 'all up to scratch just so as gangs o' yobs can come an' mess it all up do he? We don't 'ave any discos or dancin' round 'ere. It's not allowed. I don't care what the Committee says, I'm not comin' in sweepin' up after a bunch o' kids 'ave mucked it up. Let 'em go somewhere's else and bugger about .....". Indeed, in one village(2) a few people regarded the Village Hall Committee as a sort of local 'mafia'. This rigid structure renders young people powerless when it comes to taking political initiatives, and this situation is common in West Dorset. From an early age young people in villages should be allowed, almost dragged if necessary, to meetings concerning local and national issues. They have to be MADE more aware of what is going on politically. There is very little that I can add to this paragraph, except to sum up by saying that because adolescents in the area have little knowledge (of personnel or procedures) their political awareness is low. Rigid political systems at a local level restrain initiatives or positive change and the overall effect on youth is to merely consolidate their sense of powerlessness at other levels. Of course, this idea of 'youth participation' is not new. A report by the Youth Service Forum on the future role of the youth service issued a report in 1978 entitled "On The Encouragement of Youth Participation". In it the working party stated:

> "Opportunities for young people's participation are extremely limited. Disadvantaged young people (rural youth?) have even less opportunity to participate. Young people do not have much say in matters related to their home, school or community. They are unaccustomed to being involved in decision-making or choices about what to do .... Youth Participation should concentrate on enabling young people to develop the confidence and competence to participate in local issues and structures and creating opportunities for them to do so .... Young people, particularly the disadvantaged, need access to resources and decision-

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(1) Organisations committed to raising money for voluntary/aided groups.

(2) Cerne Abbas - slightly outside the study area.

making processes in all sectors of the community (not just the youth service) if youth participation is to be successful ....".

In West Dorset many adolescents are powerless to participate in the process of influencing their own futures and as a result become alienated from the communities in which they live. They are marginal to the rural social systems operating in the area and from this point of view may be regarded (almost) as outsiders. Powerlessness is at the root of all social alienation.

(B) MEANINGLESSNESS

Powerlessness or the lack of knowledge and participation on the part of many West Dorset adolescents tends to render their understanding of the rural social system meaningless. Young people simply no longer understand the functioning of the organisations of which they are a part:

17 year old girl.
Lives in Bridport.

"I used to enjoy going to the Badminton Club; I still do, but nobody knows what's going on anymore. The set up is really unfair, unless you're 'in' you've no chance of getting into the first team, even though you're playing well. It's just a complete cock-up and everybody's talking about packing it in .... I don't know what'll happen ...."

16 year old boy.
Lives in Thorncombe.

"It's alright for them that's got plenty money, they can do what they likes. But there's nothing for me round here. There's a church youth club, Quo Vadis they call it, but I don't go to church so that's me out. Life's just so boring ...."

15 year old boy.
Lives in Beaminster.

"There's no point in doin' anythin'. Nobody seems to care any more. I'll just see if I can get some work round 'ere when I leave school, but I don't know what I'll do. I just mucks about at weekend."

Post Office Worker.
Lives in Bridport.

"There's nothin' for kids round here, not really.

> It's O.K. for them who's got a bit o' money behind 'em, they gets into your drama clubs and art clubs and ballet an' that. But anybody from an ordinary family, rough 'n' ready types, they got no chance. I could 'ave been an international sprinter just before I joined the army, but I couldn't get coachin'. I was just wasted. There's only the youth club and look at the kids who goes there, parents can't be bothered with half of 'em. If mums an' dads did their jobs right we wouldn't need social services and all that ...."

There is certainly more going on in and around West Dorset than the average young person realises. There are many services available: careers service, health services, social services, leisure services, clubs and organisations of all different types. The important thing is to give these services meaning to young people in terms of their day to day construction of reality. However, as long as adolescent powerlessness remains a part of rural culture, so too will meaninglessness.

(C) NORMLESSNESS, ISOLATION, SELF-ESTRANGEMENT.

In that they feel they have no power to initiate change and the organisations around them represent meaningless social structures, many adolescents in West Dorset will exhibit signs of NORMLESSNESS. That is, they will experience the inability to reach socially accepted goals legitimately. The social systems of which they are a part preclude their positive involvement. In West Dorset when this happens a young person can even begin to reject, totally, the social goals laid down by a society which has, for the adolescent, lost all meaning. The adolescents of West Dorset, possibly more so than any other adolescents I have come across, can experience their negative attitudes to socially accepted goals so strongly that they retreat from their social roles and become, as it were, socially ISOLATED. Their silence is often interpreted as total acceptance of the status quo: "The kids round 'ere are no trouble, they's quiet and causes no damage. They've never asked for a youth club so I suppose they don't want one. They never seems to complain anyway ...." (local resident, Marshwood Vale). Indeed, it is the case that in West Dorset many youngsters are too withdrawn to make any social impact whatsoever. Those who might initiate change react to the situation by leaving the area. Those who stay and attempt to filter into the social system do so in an effort to give themselves social 'roots'. Lines of action are taken, and activities entered into, not for any intrinsic value gained therein, but for some other purpose, some ulterior motive. Lonely people in general react in a similar way, they take up (say) playing badminton not for the sake of playing badminton, but for the sake of meeting people, for the sake of 'getting out' of the house. This behaviour is a form of **SELF-ESTRANGEMENT**, a 'grasping at straws', a search for identity, a search for meaning, a search for some personal status or power. To this end we might say that, in some instances, the interaction of West Dorset youth is STRATEGIC.

SUMMARY

In West Dorset their are many different types of adolescents. Those who may be regarded as 'protest' types are few and far between, conspicuous mainly by their absence. Young people experiencing 'normal' adolescence are plentiful and in terms of numbers account for approximately half the total youth population (see next chapter). There are, however, many youngsters (again possibly 50%) who project a strangely silent image; it is this group with which I am most concerned.

In West Dorset the social systems which many young people encounter may be regarded as rigid and often disintegrating, certainly in some villages which in terms of depopulation and a loss of public services are clearly showing signs of social stress. Politically these rural social systems are often dominated by older (often retired) people or one or two powerful landowner types, the old squirearchy. Within such systems local adolescents, particularly from poorer families (but not only) may very often find themselves being treated almost as outsiders. Considerations afforded them are few. Over a period of time many young people in West Dorset endure what we might regard as an ALIENATED adolescence. A sense of POWERLESSNESS (at various levels) leads to a lack of understanding and in turn to a sense of MEANINGLESSNESS. The social goals of the richer more powerful 'status' groups cease to be social realities for many adolescents and a feeling of ISOLATION and an existence devoid of NORMS ensues. Desperate, or SELF-ESTRANGED lines of action compound within the adolescent the feeling of alienation. A good number of adolescents, perhaps 30%, will leave the area, particularly those with 'good' qualifications or high aspirations. Of those who stay, a considerable number will endure only a shadow of a contemporary adolescence. It will be without incident, and pass them by almost without a memory. Overall, the situation is such that because of their low social status, adolescents in West Dorset negotiate their individual social roles from positions of extreme weakness. Other factors are also significant. Modern day mass-media techniques and the influx of holiday makers have the effect of only frustrating rural youngsters. In the summer, their services are needed, to meet a seasonal demand. For once the adolescents feel wanted. But come the winter their services are often dispensed with quickly and the sense of having been 'ripped off' is deep. 'Grockles'(1) are often regarded with contempt, and a favourite sport entered into by many youngsters is "ripping off the Grocks down at West Bay". The media, in particular television and magazines, do little other than offer youngsters glimpses of an outside world garlanded with tinsel. Young people in West Dorset often feel they are missing out on something which, in reality, does not exist anyway. The 'plastic' images projected by the media are taken at face value by many rural adolescents and their attempts to follow the 'latest craze' are often only pitiful attempts at emulation. 'The Football Hooligan'; 'The Punk'; 'The Mod'; and a few other sub-culture types are all observable in West Dorset, mainly in the towns, but only in a seemingly confused and pseudo fashion.

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(1) Grockles: holiday makers.

The way young people are treated and regarded generally determines the way they ultimately express their adolescence publicly. Alienated youth will react in one of two severe ways: they will either withdraw into themselves and offer few public statements, or they will group together in numbers and, sooner or later, resort to extreme force and violence as a form of expression. The former type may be located in West Dorset, the latter in some of our more derelict urban areas. Not that Britain has experienced much in the way of public disorder, but it has experienced some and will continue to do so should the current recession deepen. The relationship between alienation and 'riots' has been studied (particularly in America) and it seems only a matter of time before the U.K. Governments will encounter such problems. In terms of public disorder, soccer violence is only the tip of the iceberg. Two years ago, when I was teaching in the North, youngsters from the Greater Manchester and Merseyside areas were forecasting a total breakdown of society before the turn of the century, they were talking about the 'Policed State'. They believed these things sincerely. But of course they were speaking from a poor position, socially at any rate. Unemployment has much to do with this way of thinking, but not everything, one needs to consider the levels of public (and in particular adolescent) powerlessness in their entirety. Generally speaking, the urban youth would normally have far more choice than his rural counterpart; with regards to housing, employment, career prospects in general, social activity, level of personal relationships, and so on. The rural youth must be given more choice, he must begin to feel that people are at least thinking about him as a person. For many in West Dorset this does not happen. However, having experienced both the urban and rural situations there can be no doubt that, as bad as it might be for some, living in the rural setting is far more acceptable than depressed urban living. In other words (although it is neither acceptable nor desirable) it seems to me that it is better to be unemployed in West Dorset than it is in Wigan; it is better to have no prospects in West Dorset than it is in Wigan; it is just better to be in West Dorset. The social pressures of living in the town or inner city are tremendous. In the rural setting these pressures are less weighty, they are still in evidence, but are often tempered by the very nature of the environment - open, fresh, clean, healthy. However, the needs of many young people in the area are not being met and this wants rectifying. The next chapter examines in some detail 1024 questionnaires designed to elicit certain information regarding social activity. For the rest of this chapter, I will let the youth of the area speak for themselves:

16 year old boy.
Lives in Stoke Abbot. Mother and father own a farm.

Q. Do you belong to any club or organisation?

A. Beaminster Young Farmers, every Tuesday at Melplash.

Q. What sort of things do you do there?

A. Business meetings about other young farmers, groups, plays and things. I've only just joined.

Q. How do you get there?

A. Sometimes I get a lift and sometimes I walk.

Q. Are there any other organisations you could join if you wanted to?

A. Not really, Beaminster got the Youth Centre and that's not really fantastic.

Q. Have you been to the Youth Centre at Beaminster?

A. Yes, it's a pretty grotty place, nothing really happens ....

Q. How do you think it could be improved?

A. It would be a help if they could get quite a few more people in. They mainly go to Bridport. I'm not really sure.

Q. Do you think they should offer more activities there?

A. Oh yes, every night, it's well ... one night snooker, one night's darts, one night a disco ..... if they could widen the field a bit they might get a few more people in.

Q. What sort of things could they do?

A. Organise sponsored walks, sponsored swims, things like that ... getting out and about a bit more - visits and things.

Q. What about Stoke Abbot, do you think there's any scope for any sort of club to open up there?

A. I don't think it's really worth it, it'd be a good idea to, but we've only got a village hall at the moment and you're not allowed music or drink after eleven o'clock and people round about aren't very keen on discos or things like that, the floors not safe which isn't much good.

Q. If there was a club would you be interested in going to it or do you think it ought to be for people a bit younger than you?

A. There aren't many people my age in Stoke Abbot, only one or two - it's mainly fourteen year olds and younger.

Q. So if they offered things like table tennis and pool you wouldn't want to go still?

A. I'd go if they'd got a pool table or something like that, I'd go along and try to join in.

Q. What about if they used the village hall occasionally for something like a day of drama or art, do you think you'd be interested in going to something like that?

A. Yes, I should think so.

Q. Or if they put a disco on every couple of months?

A. Well, you wouldn't get any response to that at all in a place like Stoke Abbot.

Q. Because there are too few people?

A. Yes, I don't think people from Beaminster would go to Stoke Abbot discos because the hall's pretty small.

Q. And there's not enough places roundabout to attract people from?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Any ideas of how things could be improved for people your age in this area?

A. Not really, I work on the farm with my Dad.

Q. What are you going to do when you leave school?

A. I keep changing my mind. I'd like to take up photography or filming work or something that is related to television or theatre work - my parents are related to the theatre and my sister wants to go into the theatre.

Q. So will you go to College or University?

A. There's a College up in Manchester that has a two year course.

Q. So you think you'll move out of this area?

A. Yes.

Q. Will you go to a city?

A. I suppose I'll have to. I don't really like cities. It depends on the job really.

Q. Have you had much experience in cities?

A. Yes, I lived in London all my life except for the last two years.

Q. Did you find that you missed things from London when you came here?

A. No, not really. I quite enjoyed it when we first came down here. It's nice and quiet. I really didn't like London. I was hardly ever there because I was at boarding school. I think I prefer the country. The schools I went to were on the outskirts of London. I wasn't really mad keen on all the people.

Q. You said you really liked it when you first came down here. Are you getting a bit fed up with it now?

A. Yes, I am because working with parents they have one way of doing things and you have another. After doing that for a couple of years it gets a bit monotonous really.

Q. Do you feel restricted in Stoke Abbot in that you can't just go out and see many people?

A. Yes, because Dad smashed the car so we haven't got a car. Otherwise I have to bicycle or walk so I do feel pretty restricted.

Q. If you do feel you want to get somewhere in the evenings, do you cycle in the dark?

A. Well, I try to but sometimes my parents don't like the idea. Sometimes I walk into Beaminster and get a bus into Bridport or something like that.

Q. Do you go to the cinema much?

A. Yes, I try to go because I like films and it gets me away from home. I've just started a film club at school and it starts at 8.00 in the evenings.

Q. Anything else you think there should be for people you age in this area?

A. There aren't really all that many people of my age in this area, there aren't that many in Beaminster, if they could somehow improve Beaminster Y.C.

Q. And you think that would improve if they had some transport to go on trips?

A. Yes.

Q. Where would you like to go?

A. I don't know really. As long as it's something interesting.

Q. And you think people would go then?

A. Yes.

15 year old boy.
Lives in Thorncombe, in village. Father is a farmer.

Q. Do you belong to any sort of club or organisation there?

A. No.

Q. Is there anything there you could belong to if you wanted to?

A. No.

Q. Do you think there should be something there you could go to?

A. Yes, because there's nothing to do at night. It get's a bit boring.

Q. What about Quo Vadis?

A. There was a Quo Vadis there but they stopped it.

Q. Would you have gone to that if it was still going?

A. I don't know because you had to go to church.

Q. If there was a Youth Club what would you like to be able to do there?

A. Don't know, anything.

Q. Would you like somewhere just to go with your friends and chat, or would you like games and things as well?

A. I suppose I'd like both.

Q. If a bus came out from another Youth Club, say Chard for instance, would you like to go there?

A. I'd go and see what it was like. If I liked it, I'd go again.

Q. What do you usually do in the evenings?

A. Help my father. Then I walk around the village.

Q. What about weekends?

A. We go round the countryside or for walks.

Q. Do you go into town?

A. No.

Q. What do you think you'll do when you leave school?

A. I don't know.

Q. Would you like to stay living round here or move away?

A. I'd like to stay round here.

Q. Why's that?

A. I like the countryside.

Q. You don't feel you'd like to move nearer to a place where there's a lot more going on for young people?

A. No.

Q. So you like living here on the whole?

A. Yes.

Q. Any other facility apart from a Youth Club you think there ought to be for people your age?

A. No, not really.

14 year old boy.
Lives in Puncknowle. Mother a cleaner. Father works at Westlands in Yeovil.

Q. Do you belong to any club or organisation?

A. No.

Q. Are there any in your area?

A. No, nothing at all.

Q. If there was a youth club there do you think you'd go to it?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you usually do in the evenings?

A. Play football up the road with friends.

Q. What about weekends?

A. I come over to Bridport, on the bike.

Q. If there was a club, what would you like to be able to do there?

A. Play badminton and things like that.

Q. If transport was provided to Bridport Youth Club would you like to go there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go out of this area much?

A. No, never.

6th form boy.
Lives in Puncknowle. Parents own pub. Belongs to West Dorset Golf Club at West Bay.

Q. How do you get there?

A. I've got a moped.

Q. Any clubs in your area you can go to?

A. No.

Q. What do you usually do in your spare time?

A. I work at weekends in a shop. In the evenings I just go out for an hour or so with my friends then go home and watch T.V. We kick a ball around in the evenings.

Q. Do you get bored in the evenings in the winter?

A. No, not really. If there was something I wanted to do I'd go into Bridport. I can get there quite easily.

Q. What do you think of the youth club in Bridport?

A. I've never been to it.

Q. Why not?

A. I'm not interested I suppose. I've got on quite well without it.

Q. What do you think you'll do when you leave school?

A. I haven't a clue yet. I'll wait and see what my results are.

Q. Do you want to go on to College?

A. I haven't really thought about it very much.

Q. Do you think you'll stay in this area when you leave school?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you like living here?

A. Yes I do.

Q. Is there anything you'd like to see provided in Bridport for people your age?

A. Not that I can think of.

14 year old girl.
Lives in Stoke Abbot. Father is a farm worker.
Mother doesn't live at home.

Q. Do you belong to any sort of club or organisation in your area?

A. No. Sometimes I go to Beaminster Youth Club, but not very often. We haven't got anywhere in our village.

Q. How did you used to get there?

A. I used to cycle. About three miles.

Q. Did you used to go in the winter?

A. No.

Q. Could you cycle back in the dark?

A. Well, I did sometimes, but I was a bit frightened.

Q. So there aren't any clubs near you?

A. No.

Q. What do you usually do in the evenings?

A. I usually go for a cycle. Sometimes I go down and see my mum, or else I go down and see a horse my sister is having for her birthday. I spend a lot of time down there.

Q. Do you ride it as well?

A. No, because we've got to try and break it in. I go down with my brother as well, because my sister's gone away to Germany so I've got to try and break it in for her.

Q. What do you do at the weekends? I suppose you spend some time with the horse then?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go into Beaminster or Bridport?

A. I go into Bridport on Saturdays, shopping and that.

Q. What about the evenings?

A. I stay at home and watch the T.V.

Q. Would you like to be able to go out in the evenings?

A. Yes, I would.

Q. What sort of thing would you like to do if you were able to?

A. I'd like to go to discos and things like that.

Q. Can you not get into Bridport, is that the problem?

A. Yes, it is, it's six miles into Bridport.

Q. Would you like there to be some sort of club you could go to round Stoke Abbot?

A. Yes, I wish they had one really, but they don't seem to have anything like it.

Q. Do you think there are enough people in Stoke Abbot to go to one?

A. Yes, there's quite a few children and that.

Q. What sort of thing would you like to see going on there?

A. Games, watching films and things like that.

Q. And if they had a disco once in a while you'd like to go to that?

A. Yes.

Q. If they provided transport to Beaminster Youth Club would you like to go there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know anyone who goes?

A. Yes, a couple of friends. I've been there once or twice and it was good fun.

Q. What do you want to do when you leave school?

A. I want to work with animals really. Do something in kennels with dogs; I'd love to work with dogs.

Q. Would you like to stay around this area?

A. I'll probably have to go somewhere else.

Q. Would you like to move nearer to a big town?

A. No, it's been nice and quiet where I live really. I think it would put me right off if I went somewhere noisy.

Q. So, you like living in the country?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go to big towns like Exeter or Bournemouth much?

A. No. Last time I went was to Yeovil and that was about nine months ago. That's about the only place I've been to for ages. We don't go out a lot, not really, because my Dad's got a lot of work to do on the farm.

Q. Anything else you think there should be in this area for people your age?

A. No, not really.

12 year old boy.
Lives in Netherbury village. Father is an architect.
Mother teaches in Crewkerne.

Q. Do you belong to any club or organisation?

A. Well, football team but we don't play in a league or anything, we just play in the villages.

Q. Are there any other clubs in the area?

A. Well, there used to be a youth club, but that's closed down now because there's no one to run it.

Q. Did you used to go to that?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you like it?

A. Yes.

Q. What did they do there?

A. Table tennis, snooker, cards and games and things.

Q. Did a lot of people used to go there?

A. About ten.

Q. What do you do in your spare time?

A. I just ride about on my bike.

Q. Do you go to Beaminster or Bridport at weekends?

A. I do sometimes, but we usually stay in Netherbury.

Q. So you'd like there to be some sort of youth club in Netherbury again?

A. Yes.

Q. If they provided transport to go to Beaminster Youth Club would you like to go there?

A. I'd rather have somewhere in Netherbury.

Q. Have you ever been to the Youth Club in Beaminster?

A. No.

Q. Have you heard anything about it?

A. Well, I know they do boxing there. I used to go to boxing, but not very often.

Q. What do you think you'll do when you leave school?

A. Don't know really.

Q. Do you think you'll stay in this area?

A. Well, I'd like to stay in this area. I don't like towns much.

Q. Have you been to many big towns?

A. Quite a lot.

Q. About how often do you go?

A. Once or twice a year. We go to see our granny in London or Exeter.

Q. You like living in this area on the whole then?

A. Yes.

CHAPTER THREE

YOUTH SERVICE PROVISION IN WEST DORSET

As mentioned in the Introduction, much of the information concerning general youth service provision in West Dorset was somewhat blurred. This had to be remedied. Up-to-date information concerning organisations which were offering some sort of service to young people was desperately needed; to this end I began 'OPERATION CONTACT'.(1) In March 1978 this project began to consume most of my time and though it took six months of painstaking and often boring work, my assistant and I travelling miles visiting village halls, church halls, rural youth clubs and the like and spending hours telephoning wrong or discontinued numbers, the information was finally gathered, analysed, indexed and at the beginning of September 1978 published by the County Youth Service in the form of an A - Z directory.

The directory (see Appendix) speaks for itself - an extended list of just under two hundred entries. However, some background information is perhaps useful.

For a start, and a negative one at that, the directory is by no means exhaustive. Various clubs, organisations and certain individuals were inevitably missed. Also, the day it was published saw it out of date, history; again inevitable. Nevertheless its contents do give an extremely good indication of a state of affairs in the Autumn of 1978 and even today, Spring 1981, little (perhaps 10%) has changed. It was, and still is, the most comprehensive document of its kind dealing specifically with voluntary youth work in West Dorset.

Briefly, as outlined in the directory, the youth service in the area may be divided into two broad categories, as in the rest of the country for that matter: services supported and fully maintained by the Local Education Authority and organisations in the voluntary sector. By voluntary I refer to all those organisations not controlled directly by the L.E.A. though possibly receiving financial assistance in the form of discretionary grants. As far as payments to leaders are concerned, it is not normal County policy to remunerate workers in part-time voluntary clubs, although Lyme Regis Boys Club is an exception, this exceptionality also being somewhat of an economic and historical mystery.

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(1) Under a Special Temporary Employment Programme supported financially by the Manpower Services Commission, Dorset County Council were able to employ a full-time assistant whose job would be to help me collect and analyse the much needed information. From beginning to end 'OPERATION CONTACT' was my idea and responsibility.

(A) THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY YOUTH SERVICE

(i) A Brief Overview

Regarded by the hierarchy as an important part of Higher and Further Education the Youth Service in Dorset is, in the main, centre based. There is a detached worker in Bournemouth but normally leaders function as Wardens in either purpose built centres or converted premises of one sort or another. In the West there are two centres: at Beaminster, where a converted police station provides the base and at Bridport, where the old Army Drill Hall was converted in 1969.

(ii) Leadership

To run their full-time centres the L.E.A. employs only qualified personnel. True, many of the part-time leaders employed in full-time establishments are not qualified, but these people are normally recruited by the Warden as assistants only. As far as full-time assistants are concerned neither of the two centres in West Dorset qualify for consideration. In fact there are only two centres throughout the whole of the County afforded such luxury, both of these being in the heavily populated Bournemouth area.(1)

It is not my intention to offer any descriptions regarding the day-to-day duties of either full-time or part-time leaders. What youth workers do is, to a certain extent, common knowledge. I am more interested in what they do not do, or to be a little more precise, in what they are not EXPECTED to do. To be sure, leaders in Dorset have an exceptionally free hand to develop youth work in any direction they see fit. However, having a contractual agreement to open their centres at least five evenings a week necessarily restrains them when work outside the 'four walls' of their clubs presents itself as a possibility. Encouraged, though not supported by the County, effective work with the 'unattached' or new organisations or rural youth groups is exceptionally difficult to initiate and both myself and my counterpart in Beaminster found it virtually impossible to make any worthwhile or lasting contacts. Initiatives outside our own centres tended to be either random, lacking continuity, or so time consuming as to be detrimental to our own club work. Hence, when people like Mr. Forsey from Bettiscombe cried for help or assistance the full-time youth workers, the face-to-face professionals, had little or no chance of responding positively; neither were they expected to.

Such is still the case, but it was not always so. Back in 1969 the leader of the Bridport centre had a wide brief to both contact and support organisations in the rural district. The records show, however, that this never came to pass and youth work in West Dorset has always been 95% centre based. Voluntary clubs in 'the sticks', and a good few in the towns for that matter, have, generally speaking, been left to their own devices. How this situation might be changed beneficially is outlined in the recommendations and conclusions at the end of this thesis.

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(1) Since this was originally written in 1978 another three centres in the BOURNEMOUTH area have been given full-time assistant leaders.

(iii) Management, Communications and Central Control

Although Wardens are (broadly speaking) responsible for the building, employees and all programme planning, general management of youth centres is handled by Management Committee. For better or worse, both West Dorset clubs have such committees controlling overall policy and little else needs saying on the matter. Management committees are a strong, weak, good, bad, useful, useless, thoughtful, thoughtless, active, inactive, group, bunch of committed, non-committed individuals, idiots, who play either a large or small part in guiding policy depending on who is in the 'chair' or what time the pubs open. As far as my own club was concerned, the Management Committee always made a positive contribution and without their help and assistance my own effectiveness would have been seriously hindered. Nevertheless, and taking all the good they can do into consideration, far more important issues than the involvement of any single Management Committee revolve around, (a) how the service as a whole is administered and controlled, (b) the quality of the main communications system set up centrally and, (c) the support offered to grass-roots leaders from above.

Throughout this study I have referred to the area in which my research was carried out as West Dorset. Geographically this is correct. Administratively speaking however, West Dorset is lumped with Dorchester, Weymouth and part of North Dorset (Yetminster and Sherborne) to form an area known, on paper, as South and West Dorset. This section of the County Youth Service is controlled centrally through an Area Youth Office based in Dorchester (15 miles east of Bridport) where, as a matter of interest, one also finds County Hall and all that therein is - Director of Education, Director of Higher and Further Education, County Youth Officer, County Youth Service Training Officer and all the usual support services. As far as developing work in the rural West is concerned, the implications of this administrative arrangement are far reaching and will be considered in some depth later. At this stage it will suffice to say that whilst communications between the L.E.A. clubs (in the West and North especially) and the administrative hub in Dorchester are adequate, nothing more than that, central support and communications with organisations in the voluntary sector were generally poor. This is not surprising considering the fact that in 1978 the Directory of Information I compiled was in effect a complete revision and extension of existing records. The Area Youth Officers were simply not aware of the existence of many organisations and, without question, leaders of various clubs in the rural areas were not aware of the many services provided by either the local L.E.A. clubs in Bridport and Beaminster or the Area Office in Dorchester. To a certain extent publication of the Directory went some way to rectifying this situation. However, considering the size of the area they have to cover and the number of full-time centres on their patch, the two officers in Dorchester have a considerable amount of work anyway without having to support voluntary organisations based in villages perhaps twenty five or thirty miles away. That job is supposed to be handled by the Dorset Association of Youth Clubs (D.A.Y.C.).

(B) THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Within the research area there are a myriad of voluntary organisations. Some of them, like the Scouts or Young Farmers Clubs are well established and have administrative and organisational centres both locally and nationally. They also have clearly defined guide lines along which to run - patterns of traditional procedure. Other groups, such as badminton or archery clubs - sports and certain other specialist organisations in general - are normally affiliated to National Associations who determine rules and regulations (to which clubs must strictly adhere) and set standards (to which clubs aspire). Non-conformist groups, such as the American Square Dancing Club or the West Country Embroiderers are often small, though lively, and sometimes difficult to locate, particularly if their meetings are irregular and held (say) on a rota basis in the homes of its members. 'Open' clubs.(1) catering specifically for youth, are scattered throughout the whole of the area. Most of these, however, experience severe problems and exist almost on a day-to-day basis. For example, village youth clubs 'going to the wall' in 1978/79 included Litton Cheney and Drimpton and clubs 'on the rocks' included Charmouth, Loders, Powerstock and Bettiscombe.
Reasons and recommendations will be dealt with later, as a general note I will add that most of the Youth and Community work in the area tends to polarise towards one of the three main towns, and that organisations with a fair percentage of adult members (though small in themselves) will outlive youth groups offering an 'open' programme of activities. Open youth groups suffer more than most because of (a) lack of support and (b) poor communications. To consider the interests of young people generally the County Youth Service relies on the Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis Area Youth Committee, and to support 'open' youth clubs in particular, one need look no further than the D.A.Y.C.

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(1) The term 'Open' merely refers to the fact that for these organisations such things as aims and objectives or general expectations of members' behaviour are not bounded by tradition or a particular set of 'laws'. Open youth clubs have ground rules, tried and trusted methods, but no specific code of conduct or books of rules as do say the Guides or Scouts.

(i) The Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis Area Youth Committee

Briefly: endowed with the thankless task of supporting youth work in both town and country, the Area Youth Committee for Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis meets once every three months, normally in the Bridport Youth Centre. The basic idea, the general concept of forming such a committee is, in theory, excellent. In practice, unfortunately, the theory tended to break down. As with the Area Youth Office, an abundance of handicaps, both major and minor, inflict themselves upon the Committee and thereby cripple its overall effectiveness. A summary analysis might include:-

(a) The problems of commuting around the area, which at times are severe and have the compound effect of almost doubling its geographical square mileage. As a result, the Committee's attempts to offer meaningful support to maybe a hundred clubs and organisations oriented towards youth become diluted through space and time; the ripples of effectiveness becoming weaker outside Bridport town. Not that the Committee really helps itself on this issue. Year in, year out, it seems to sit in solemn silence, waiting for leaders to approach, like subjects, in order to receive some sort of inspirational manna. This clearly does not work. People are reluctant to undertake long, time-consuming journeys unless real benefits accrue, assuming, of course, that they have knowledge of the meetings in the first place; and this is another problem.

(b) As I have stressed time and again, until I produced the Directory most of the basic information available concerning youth and youth organisations was erroneous. The unfortunate but predictable results being that in many cases newsletters or notices sent out were never received, new organisations were omitted from mailing lists and personal contacts with potential Committee members few and far between. Thus, a quarterly meeting might attract perhaps ten people (often less), including the three main officers, and a less than ten per cent representation was common place.

(c) A final note: it has to be said that the three main officers to whom I made reference are, by any standards, overworked. Dedicated and vastly experienced, their personal commitment to the Youth Service as a whole is vast and, to a certain extent, subject to the law of diminishing returns. Stretched beyond capacity their strengths become weakened by over use and, in a nutshell, their involvement with too many groups thwarts their efforts to be truly effective in the case of any one. For example: the Area Youth Officer always acts as Secretary. Any pressures or problems he might have, or knowledge he might lack, are reflected in his performance as chief communicator and co-ordinator for the Committee. He also has the task of carrying out secretarial duties for umpteen other Management and Area Committees, which, in the long run, creates vast problems from an organisational point of view. The same might be said of the

Chairman. Not only Chairman of the Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis Area Committee, Scout and Guide Committees, Duke of Edinburgh Award Panel, County Youth Advisory Panel, plus a deluge of sub-committees concerned with policy planning. To me, and to others, it always seemed that between them the Chairman and Secretary sat on more committees and sub-committees than any other two individuals in the whole of the area, possibly the whole of the County. This cannot be a healthy situation, particularly for those organisations with little 'clout', and rural youth clubs are notoriously poor at 'blowing their own trumpets'.

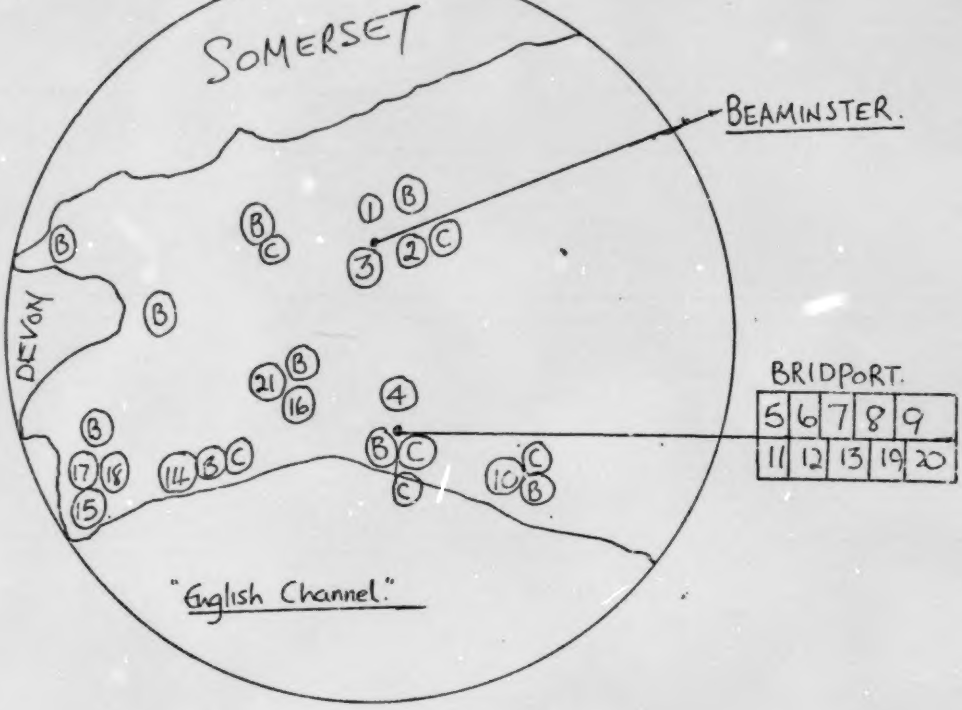
To conclude, it might be said that over the years the Area Committee did little other than dole out small amounts of grant aid to those organisations either interested or well-informed enough to have applied. However, as an inspirational figure-head for youth workers in the West, the Area Youth Committee never realised its potential; some remedies are put forward towards the end of this thesis.

(ii) The Dorset Association of Youth Clubs

Based in Dorchester, this particular Association is a branch of the nationwide National Association of Youth Clubs, overall control of the Dorset operation being in the hands of a full-time secretary/organiser who promotes and fosters voluntary youth work across the whole of the County. In the Dorchester, Weymouth and Bournemouth areas the D.A.Y.C. have an excellent following and do a tremendous amount of good work. In the West, however, its effect is slightly less than negligible and apart from the two L.E.A. clubs, and Charmouth Y.C., no other organisations seem to make use of its services, which is a pity. Most of the County competitions and events are based in the far East or Dorchester and even if their clubs were affiliated, leaders of part-time organisations in the West would encounter severe transport problems should such trips be considered. Even the full-time centre in Bridport had to shelve many outings, until it was in a position to purchase its own mini-bus at any rate.

To be fair, the Secretary of the D.A.Y.C. has no real support in the West. As was mentioned earlier, full-time leaders are severely restricted and I cannot recall the Secretary ever being invited to an Area Committee meeting; he certainly never attended anyway. Again, as with both the Area Youth Office and Area Youth Committee, the D.A.Y.C. seems incapable of offering its best to clubs in the rural area West of Dorchester; the system, the organisation, cannot take the strain and links are either never made or broken without resistance.

MAP 2: UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

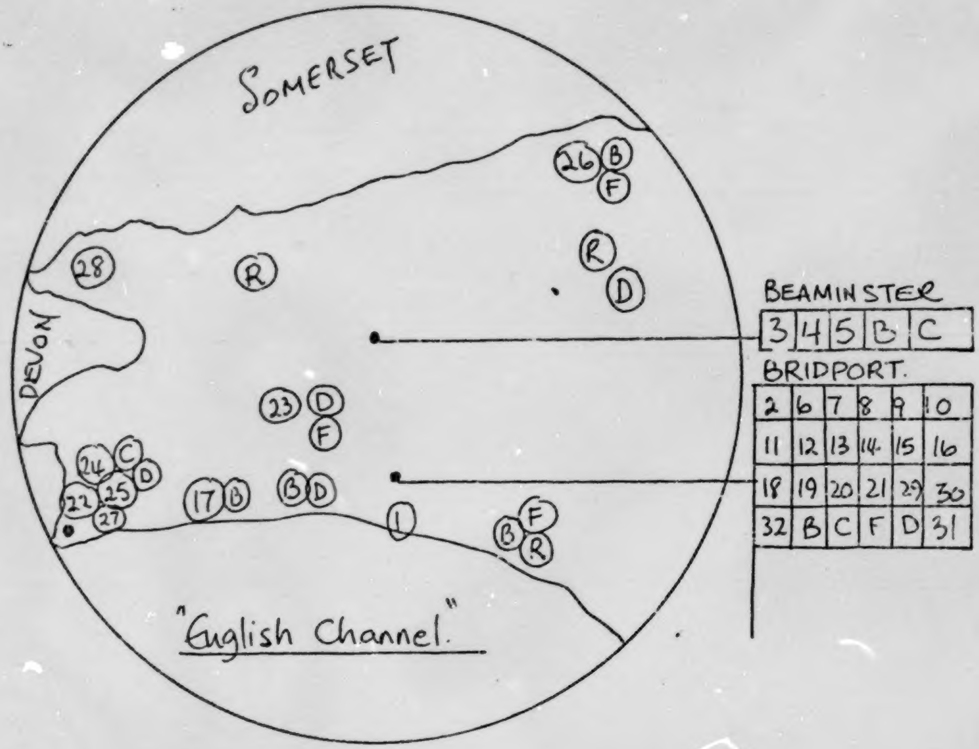

SOMERSET
BEAMINSTER.
DEVON
BRIDPORT.
5 6 7 8 9
11 12 13 19 20
1
B
B
C
3
2
C
B
B
21
B
16
4
B
17
18
15
14
B
C
B
C
C
10
C
B
"English Channel."

1. Beaminster Army Cadets
2. 1st Beaminster Guides
3. 1st Beaminster Scouts
4. 1st Bradpole Guides
5. 1st Bridport Girls Brigade
6. 1st Bridport Girl Guides
7. Bridport Girls Venture Corps
8. Bridport Sea Cadets
9. Bridport 1st Scouts
10. 1st Bride Valley Scouts
11. Bridport Sea Scouts
12. Bridport Army Cadets
13. Bridport Air Training Corps
14. 1st Charmouth Guides
15. 1st Lyme Regis Guides
16. 1st Symondsbury Guides
17. Lyme Regis Army Cadets
18. Lyme Regis Sea Scouts
19. Royal Observer Corps, Bridport
20. St.Johns Ambulance Cadets, Bridport
21. 1st Symondsbury Scouts

(B) Brownie Packs: Broadwindsor, Beaminster, Charmouth, Lyme Regis, Thorncombe, Marshwood, Bridport (3), Burton Bradstock, Symondsbury.

(C) Cubs: Bridport, Broadwindsor, Burton Bradstock, Charmouth, Beaminster, West Bay (2).

MAP 3: 'OTHER' ORGANISATIONS (including Sports Clubs)


SOMERSET
DEVON
"English Channel"
26
B
F
28
R
R
D
BEAMINSTER
3 4 5 B C
BRIDPORT.
2 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16
18 19 20 21 29 30
32 B C F D 31
23
D
F
24
C
D
25
22
27
17
B
B
D
1
F
B
R

1. West Bay Sea Angling Club
2. Bridport Ballet Club
3. Beaminster Bowmen (Archery)
4. Beaminster Camera Club (held at school)
5. Beaminster Swimming Club (held at school)
6. Bridport Rambling Club
7. Bridport Arts Society
8. Bridport Dog Training Society
9. Bridport 18+ Group
10. Bridport Jazz Club
11. Bridport Judo Club
12. Bridport Model Railway Club
13. Bridport Cadet Band
14. Bridport Swimming Club
15. Bridport Rugby Club
16. Bridport Tennis Club
17. Charmouth Tennis Club
18. Bird Cage Society, Bridport
19. Junior Golf Club, Bridport
20. Folk Dancing & Song Society, Bridport
21. Golden Hind Venture Corps, Bridport
22. Lyme Regis Judo Club.
23. Netherbury Judo Club
24. Lyme Regis Chess Club
25. Lyme Regis Sea Angling Club
26. Melbury Osmond Tennis Club
27. Lyme Regis Sailing Club
28. Star Square Dancing, Thorncombe
29. Bridport Stamp Club
30. Bridport Table Tennis League
31. West Dorset Hockey Club, Bridport.
32. West Country Embroiderers

(B) Badminton Clubs: Bridport, Beaminster, Burton Bradstock, Charmouth, Melbury Osmond, Chideock.

(C) Cricket Clubs: Beaminster, Lyme Regis,· Bridport.

(contd.)

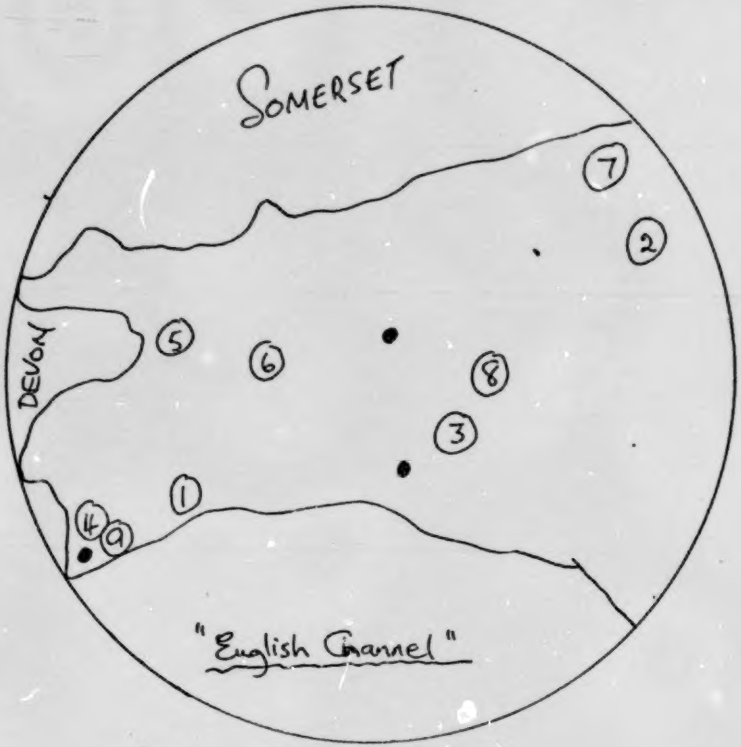
MAP 3: 'OTHER' ORGANISATIONS (contd.)

(F) Junior Football: Bridport, Burton Bradstock, Symondsbury, Melbury Osmond.

(D) Drama Clubs: Bridport (3), Lyme Regis, Symondsbury, Chideock, Evershot.

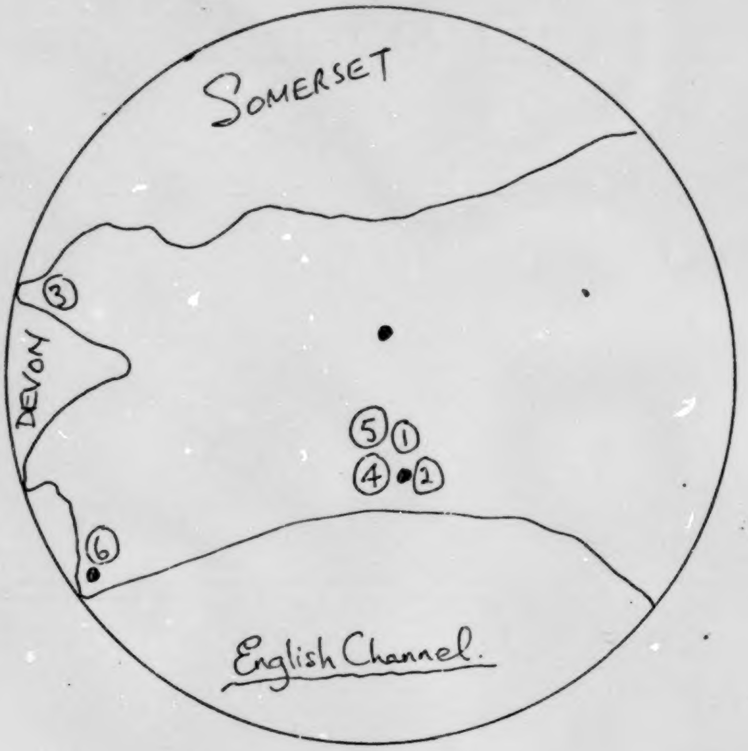
(R) Riding Stables: Burton Bradstock, Broadwindsor, Chideock.

MAP 4: VILLAGE YOUTH CLUBS ('OPEN' AND VOLUNTARY)


SOMERSET
DEVON
"English Channel"
7
2
5
6
8
3
1
4
9

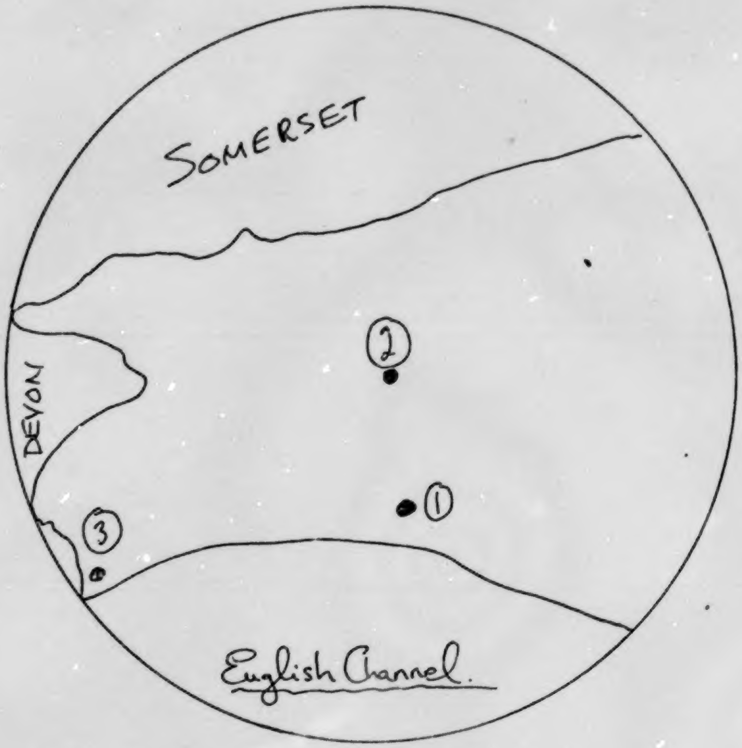
1. Charmouth Youth Club
2. Drimpton Youth Club (finished 1979)
3. Loders Youth Club
4. Lyme Regis Boys Club
5. Bettiscombe and Holditch Youth Club
6. Marshwood Vale Young Farmers (Broadoak)
7. Melbury Osmond Youth Club
8. Powerstock Youth Club
9. Younger Generation Club (Lyme Regis): Semi-commercial 'Disco'.

MAP 5: CHURCH YOUTH GROUPS


SOMERSET
DEVON
③
⑤
①
④
②
⑥
English Channel.

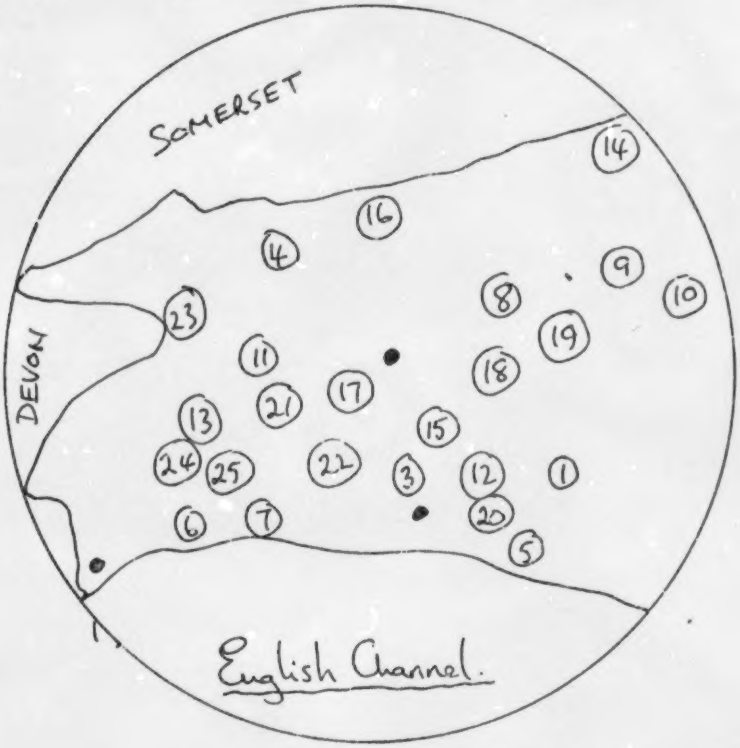
1. Bradpole Church Youth Club (8 - 12 year olds)
2. United Reformed Youth Orchestra
3. Thorncombe Quo Vadis Club
4. Church House under 10's Club, Bridport
5. Bridport United Church Fellowship
6. Lyme Regis Parish Camping Club

MAP 6: LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY YOUTH CENTRES


SOMERSET
DEVON
②
①
③
English Channel.

1. Bridport Youth Centre
2. Beaminster Youth Centre
3. Lyme Regis Adventure Centre (caters mainly for schools)

MAP 7: VILLAGE HALLS


SOMERSET
DEVON
English Channel.
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1. Askerswell
2. Blackdown
3. Bradpole
4. Broadwindsor
5. Burton Bradstock
6. Charmouth*
7. Chideock
8. Corscombe
9. Drimpton*
10. Evershot
11. Bettiscombe*
12. Loders*
13. Marshwood
14. Melbury Osmond*
15. Melplash
16. Mosterton
17. Netherbury
18. Powerstock*
19. Rampisham
20. Shipton Gorge
21. Stoke Abbot
22. Symondsbury
23. Thorncombe
24. Whitchurch Canonicorum
25. Wootton Fitzpaine

* indicates villages with 'open' youth clubs.

To briefly sum up this chapter so far: in an effort to remedy the lack of up-to-date information concerning the provision for young people in West Dorset, I set up a research project (OPERATION CONTACT) in the spring of 1978. The information was duly gathered and eventually published by the County Youth Service in the form of an A - Z directory. This shows about 90% of all youth work in the area to be voluntary. The L.E.A. maintains two full-time centres, at Bridport and Beaminster, both of which operate predominantly 'centre based' programmes. There is no detached youth worker in the area. The L.E.A. centres have full-time wardens supported by management committees and Area Youth Officer support comes from County Hall in Dorchester. The voluntary sector receives sparse support from both the Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis Area Youth Committee and the Dorset Association of Youth Clubs. As can be seen from the maps, much of the work being done is centred around the three main towns and children in outlying villages are obviously worse off, as far as youth service provision is concerned anyway. Progressive work in the area suffers (mainly) from poor communication systems, a lack of knowledge on the part of certain officials concerning grass roots initiatives and changes, an awkward geographical location and a history of neglect. But what about 'TAKE-UP'? In other words how are the services provided being used, and by whom? The 1024 questionnaires helped me establish some important patterns.

(C) THE QUESTIONNAIRES ..... were designed to help me answer some very simple questions, for example: how many young people in the area are members of (or at least make use of) particular organisations? If so, how often do they attend? Are young people in the area aware of what is on offer both locally and generally? If provision is lacking, would they like to see something start up? If so, what kind of organisations or activities would be popular? What do young people enjoy doing in their spare time? Are there any particular activities they would like to pursue but for one reason or another cannot? How many of the young people have part-time jobs? How often do young people, particularly those living in villages, feel at a loss for something to do? How often do young people in the area get to the cinema or enjoy social dancing. Are these particular pastimes important anyway? If some sort of mobile art/drama workshop was to visit their area would young people be at all interested? If a sports/activity complex was available in (say) Bridport, would the young people and their families make use of it? Would they have problems getting into Bridport? Finally, if the answers to these questions gives us some insight into the social habits of young people, are there any significant differences between those living in the towns and those in the villages? Let us consider some of the findings.

For a start, gaining admission to the three main comprehensive schools the questionnaires were distributed amongst eleven to eighteen year olds in the following way (see page 105). I have also enclosed a copy of the questionnaire itself.

110

TABLE 3. GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING YOUTH AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN WEST DORSET

PERSONAL DETAILS (Please tick the appropriate box)

SCHOOL: COLFOX ☐ WOODROFFE ☐ BEAMINSTER ☐

AGE: 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐

SEX: MALE ☐ FEMALE ☐

ADDRESS: (We only want to know the town or village NOT your FULL address. If you live in Bridport please state which area, e.g. BRADPOLE, BOTHENHAMPTON, SKILLING, etc.)

____

QUESTIONS:

1(a) Are you a member of one or more organisations (including school based organisations) e.g. youth club, scouts, drama club, football team, etc? Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If so, please state which ______________________________

(c) Do you go on average:-
more than once a week ☐
once a week ☐
once a fortnight ☐
once a month ☐
rarely ☐

2. Is there one or more particular sports, hobby, interest or activity that you pursue in your spare time? Please state what and if possible indicate how often you do this.

(a) Summer activities How often

(b) Winter activities How often

3(a) Have you got a part-time job of any kind which provides you with any income at all, no matter how small, e.g. babysitting, paper round, Saturday job? Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If yes, please **state** what you do and when you work ____________________________

____

...

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE (contd.)

4(a) How often do you go to the cinema?
once a week ☐
once a fortnight ☐
once a month ☐
less than once a month ☐

(b) Where do you usually go? ____________________

5(a) How often do you go to discos, dances, etc?
once a week ☐
once a fortnight ☐
once a month ☐
less than once a month ☐

(b) Where do you usually go? ____________________

6(a) In the evenings and in particular on winter evenings, do you ever find yourself at a loss for something to do?
Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) How often does this happen?
all the time ☐
fairly often ☐
every now and then ☐
rarely ☐

7(a) Is there anything you would like to do in your spare time, but can't for some reason?
Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If yes, please state what you would like to do ________________

(c) Why can't you do it? e.g. nowhere to do it, too expensive, no time, no equipment, etc. ________________________________

8(a) Are there any organisations, e.g. youth club, scouts, guides, drama club, football team, etc. in your area?
Yes ☐ No ☐
Don't know ☐

(b) If yes, please state which organisations.

(c) Do you know the names of the leaders? Yes ☐ No ☐

(d) If there are no organisations in your area would you like to see something start up? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Try to imagine a club or centre of any kind that you would really enjoy going to. What sort of things would you like to be able to do there? ________________________________

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE (contd)

10(a) If there was a sports complex or activities complex in Bridport which was not organised like a club but open to everyone at all times offering, for instance, badminton, judo, netball, tennis, 5-a-side football, water sports, boxing, art, drama, etc., do you think you would like to go

often ☐ never ☐

(b) Would you have problems getting into Bridport

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. If a mobile art and craft or drama workshop came regularly to your town or village, do you think you would make use of it?

Yes ☐ No ☐

TABLE 4. **DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES** **TOTAL SAMPLE:** 1024

LOCATION	BRIDPORT (336)								BEAMINSTER (90)								LYME REGIS (60)							
AGE	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
MALE	11	18	30	59	29	13	2	2	2	6	8	18	4	5	1	0	3	2	5	8	9	1	0	0
FEMALE	15	14	38	62	23	12	5	3	2	3	12	21	4	3	1	0	5	3	5	7	6	3	3	0
TOTALS	26	32	68	121	52	25	7	5	4	9	20	39	8	8	2	0	8	5	10	15	15	4	3	0

(contd.)

	VILLAGES (538)								TOTALS
AGE	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
MALE	21	33	49	72	46	20	5	2	484
FEMALE	28	25	69	94	44	20	8	2	540
TOTALS	49	58	118	166	90	40	13	4	1024

TABLE 4 (contd.)

DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES (contd.)

Age group sub-totals

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
11	37	50	87
12	59	45	104
13	92	124	216
14	157	184	341
15	88	77	165
16	39	38	77
17	8	17	25
18	4	5	9
TOTAL	484	540	1024

N.B. The sample of 1024 represents approximately 40% of the total children attending the three main comprehensive schools, distribution as follows:-

SCHOOL	Percentage of sample
Colfox (Bridport)	52
Beaminster School	35
Woodroffe (Lyme Regis)	13

Q. 1. MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE OF ORGANISATIONS

Sample: Towns: 486
Villages: 538
1024

ORGANISATION	Percentage of Sample	
	Towns	Villages
Youth Clubs	37	13
Scouts & Guides	20	23
Sports Organisation	40	27
Other	26	23
1 organisation	68	55
2 organisations	25	16
3 organisations	3	1.5
4 organisations	0.5	0

ATTENDANCE

Sample: Towns: 330
Villages: 296
626

FREQUENCY	Percentage of Sample	
	Town	Village
More than once a week	34	20
Once a week	59	66
Once a fortnight	3	7
Once a month	2	4
Rarely	2	3

It was not surprising to find that 'open' youth clubs catered for more youngsters in towns than villages. As mentioned earlier, both Bridport and Beaminster have L.E.A. centres and Lyme Regis has the Boys' Club. The uniformed organisations catered for about a fifth of the total sample (slightly more in the villages) but members tend to be on the young side, in the eleven to thirteen age range. I attended a conference recently at which this very problem (how to attract and keep older adolescents in the uniformed organisations) was raised. Apart from a general statement concerning "a change of approach" nothing specific was brought up. An interesting point worth mentioning, from the figures it appears that young people living in villages are prepared to travel (which normally means that parents are prepared to take them) to participate in the activities of uniformed groups such as scouts, but not to the 'open' youth club. The reasons for this are numerous, but possibly best summed up by one thirteen year old boy from Symondsbury: "I've never been to the youth club in Bridport, my parents don't really wan't me to go. They say it's pretty rough and only 'yobs' go to it". Nothing could be further from the truth. However, give a dog a bad name ....

Many of the sports oriented clubs are school based and it is worth noting that village youngsters participate in these activities far less than their town counterparts. Obviously lack of transport is a key issue, particularly in winter.

Generally speaking we can say that the 40% or so not belonging to any organisation take this line of action for one of two reasons: either they do not want to (nothing particularly appeals to them or they get on quite well by themselves and feel no need to join an organisation) or they cannot (transport problems, nothing available locally, parental pressure). There is, however, some evidence to suggest that a few more youngsters would join groups if in fact they had more information, answers to a number of questionnaires indicated a total lack of local knowledge on the part of the respondents regarding the actual existence, let alone the specific activities, of certain organisations. It would be wrong to assume that the youth service (either voluntary or statutory) is failing this 40%. It is failing some, particularly in the villages, but in the towns the youth service is doing a magnificent job. Almost 70% of the youngsters in towns belong to some sort of organisation, 25% belong to two. These are good figures by anybody's standards. True, take away school based clubs and the picture would change, but then almost 40% of town youngsters attend their local youth club, and quite regularly too. Improvements can be made, outreach work with the 'un-clubables' is needed and work with the sixteen to nineteen year olds needs developing rapidly. In the villages the pattern is less clear, but one thing is certain - there is a desperate need to develop 'open' youth work. Only 13% (the lowest figure) of young people in West Dorset villages attend open youth clubs and initiatives are urgently needed.

Q. 2. SPARE TIME ACTIVITY Sample: 1024

ACTIVITY	Percentage of Sample
Swimming	59
Cricket/Football/ Tennis etc.	41
Walking/Cycling	23
Fishing/Shooting	12
Riding	9
Camping	8
Water Sport/Scrambling	7
Reading	7
Music	7
Skateboarding	5
Needlework	4
Art/Craft	4
Judo/Yoga	3
Model making	3
Mechanics/Electrics	2
Other	2

There were no marked differences between young people living in towns and those in villages. Similarly all those who mentioned swimming did so in the context of it being a summer activity only. Few children said they went swimming in winter. This was a little surprising, particularly coming from the children living in towns. Both L.E.A. youth centres, and the active swimming club in Bridport, make regular trips to the public swimming pool in Yeovil (the nearest pool in Dorset being at Weymouth, twenty odd miles away). Maybe the youngsters did not see these trips as 'spare time' or, which is more likely, swimming simply predominates in the summer but not so much in winter. All the secondary schools in the area have outdoor pools, as do a good many primary schools, and of course there is always the sea. Indeed, I was surprised to find only 59% mentioned swimming. I had expected at least 90%. Again, if the schools did not provide this service there would be a serious gap, for everyone, not just children living in villages. The area would seem capable of supporting a public pool quite easily, but although many a campaign has been fought, Bridport and West Dorset, still lacks this social amenity.

The 23% who mentioned walking and cycling did so, I suspect, in the context of their everyday lives, rather than as a special event organised by a rambling club or 'wheelers' group. Lots of young people in villages spend time "just walking around doing nothing much".

Q. 3. PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT Sample: 1024

Just over half (53% villages and 52% towns) of the respondents said they had a part-time job of one sort or another. The majority of youngsters work either Saturday or Sunday, and very often both, particularly in the summer when shops, cafes and guest houses are open almost continuously in an effort to take advantage of the extra holiday trade. Jobs such as babysitting (girls) and delivering newspapers (boys) were also mentioned quite often, and children living in villages obviously help out on farms, particularly in the school holidays.

It was interesting that of the ten eleven year olds who admitted to having a part-time job, eight lived in villages. As the total sample of eleven year olds living in villages only amounted to forty nine, the figure of eight is equal to about 17%. A further search showed these youngsters coming from larger families and obviously the sooner a child can start earning money, the better, at least from the family's point of view. Just how much these youngsters receive in terms of remuneration is extremely difficult to assess. It is probably very little, perhaps as low as thirty or forty pence an hour. One of my club members in Bridport often worked a long eight hour Saturday on the farm for only £2.50, and he was fifteen, not eleven. Generally speaking wages in West Dorset are extremely low. For example, a taxi driver in Bridport was on a basic wage of £32 for a five day week (1979). He left the job and picked up £28 working as a part-time cleaner for the County Council. The job apparently suited him better, he was able to concentrate on his Trade Union work. He was the only union activist I met in West Dorset, although I did hear of others, and also a communist, in that he seemed to be very much alone.

Many youngsters simply pick up what they can: "It's not just the money, the farmer don't give us much. But we gets spuds an' cabbages an like, an' whatever we can thieve or pick up an' sell. There's always somethin' lyin' about." As mentioned earlier, the 'hidden economy' is extremely active in West Dorset, 'scrounging' and 'hustling' are a way of life. Many youngsters, and adults too, will do almost anything for small sums of money. This is not so in an urban area where other factors come in to play.

Q. 4. VISITS TO THE CINEMA (Analysis by town and village).

Sample: 1024

FREQUENCY	Percentage of Sample	
	Towns	Villages
Weekly	10%	4%
Fortnightly	23%	9%
Monthly	36%	32%
Rarely	31%	55%

For many young people living in villages visits to the cinema are a rare luxury, they always were. However, the figures clearly show that even young people in the towns frequent the 'flicks' far less often than did their parents or grandparents. High admission charges and a lack of regular family entertainment are the main causes for this fall off, not forgetting the power of television of course. Nevertheless, the local cinemas in Bridport and Lyme Regis do attract good audiences when a 'popular' film is showing, but a trip to the 'pictures' is no longer the cheap three hours it used to be and for people living in villages such journeys are simply not worth the trouble. The Community Council of Dorset's initiative in taking films to village halls (Reels on Wheels) is popular and a similar move by the Youth Service would be appreciated, certainly by many of the younger children in the area. Over the years the attraction of the 'Silver Screen Superstar' has lost ground to television personalities. Queuing for the 'second house' is a rare occurrence and socially the cinema has little to offer modern day youth. Even in urban areas the 'film' fails miserably to ignite adolescent imaginations the way it used to. In West Dorset the cultural effects of the cinema (in terms of fashion, music, style and so on) are negligible. The film can still educate, in some cases even entertain, but in rural Dorset its demise would hardly be missed by the majority of people. A couple of years ago a touring theatre company from Goldsmiths' College in London proved, for me anyway, that live theatre was as popular in the villages as is the cinema, if not more popular, and more initiatives like this are needed.

Q. 5. SOCIAL DANCING AND 'DISCOS' (Analysis by town and village).

Sample: 1024

FREQUENCY	Percentage of sample	
	Town	Village
Weekly	11	6
Fortnightly	8	6
Monthly	30	30
Rarely	51	58

As with trips to the cinema, social dancing is for many youngsters a non-event. Just how important an omission this is from their social lives depends to a certain extent on one's point of view. At my own youth centre in Bridport I would put on 'discos' about once a month, but they were hardly ever requested by the members and I dare say a decision to abandon 'discos' completely would not have been questioned by the majority. My experience of running youth clubs in the North of England shows the urban youth far more demanding as far as participating in social dancing is concerned. In Wigan there is a massive 'disco scene', and if only a week (often less) went by without such an event taking place, a largish party of senior members would be chasing me round the youth club. This never happened in West Dorset. Rural youth seem to expect far less from society and adults than do their urban counterparts and, in a way, youngsters in villages (and to a certain extent the towns) do not expect people to organise discos or dances for them, and it is very easy for adults to make a mental shift and equate low expectations with low needs. This is clearly social and cultural nonsense, but it happens, particularly in rural villages. I personally think social dancing an important part of a child's total education, but many young people in West Dorset have grown up without this stimulus regularly so may be they do not need 'discos' and the like as much as urban teenagers. In urban areas a lack of entertainment often means a predominance of smashed windows or 'muggings', vandalism in general, young people seem to need the 'throb' of music, it has a sort of cathartic effect on them. No so in West Dorset. Dancing is more important than visits to the cinema, of that I am sure, but rural youngsters do not expect anything more than a 'taste' of the dance every now and then, three or four 'discos' a year seems quite sufficient. Whether this means that young people in rural areas do not need much in the way of social dancing I am not sure.

Q. 6. "ARE YOU EVER AT A LOSS FOR SOMETHING TO DO?"

(Analysis by town and village).

Sample: 1024

FREQUENCY	Percentage of Sample			
	Town	Village	Not belonging to organisations	Belonging to organisations
Never	37	32	35	35
Rarely	12	18	17	14
Occasionally	31	33	28	35
Often	15	13	15	13
All the time	5	4	5	3

This is perhaps the most interesting set of figures. When I set this particular question I did so expecting far more than 16% of village children to tick either 'often' or 'all the time'; according to some sources every child in every rural area in the British Isles is at a loss for something to do nearly all the time. This is not true. However, when we analyse the figures it is worth considering the following points: (a) the questionnaires were distributed in the summer, a time when young people are less likely to be at a loss for something to do. They have more opportunity to work, if they are old enough that is, more social events are happening (summer fetes, discos, sports days, discos on caravan sites), and of course the light evenings and warm days allow youngsters to go down to the beach or into the vale for swimming and picnics. Holiday makers abound, which creates more interest anyway, and generally summer in the country is a silly season, with much going on for everyone. Had we conducted the survey in winter the picture would probably have been somewhat different. The percentages would have moved down the frequency chart, there can be no doubt about this. (b) It is extremely difficult to understand just exactly what young people regard as "being at a loss for something to do". Are they talking about just feeling bored? And how many kinds of boredom are there - quite bored, very bored, or in the words of one youngster from Salway Ash, "totally pissed off"? I take this feeling of "being at a loss for something to do" to mean something like "no one seems to be taking a real interest in me as a person". To ask this sort of question is extremely difficult through a questionnaire, we are into the realms of trying to quantify a highly subjective feeling, and this is awkward when dealing with younger adolescents. (c) If we condense the frequency chart to three alternatives, 'RARELY', 'OCCASIONALLY' and 'OFTEN', the key is clearly how many young people offer 'OCCASIONALLY' as an answer. It turns out to be about a third for both town and village. What this means in simple terms, is that there will be occasions when as many as 50% of young people in the area OFTEN feel "at a loss for something to do". There will also be times when 80% of the group RARELY "feel at a loss for something to do". However, the situation on the ground will never be so clear cut. As far as the Youth Service is concerned, its presence should be felt most when a majority of youngsters are in fact at a loss for something to do, and that is more than likely to be in the winter. From observations in the field, it is possible that about half the youth population in West Dorset (a conservative estimate) will experience chronic and lasting 'boredom' at sometime between October and March. This is the period when the Youth Service should be at its most active.

Q. 7. "THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO DO ..... BUT CAN'T" Sample: 1024

This is a fairly straightforward sort of question. 37% of the survey group failed to respond to the question, indicating that there is nothing in particular which they would like to do but for one reason or another cannot. The remaining 63% reacted as follows:

ACTIVITY	Percentage of Sample
Sports (riding, swimming, tennis, soccer and many others	65%
Trips, visits, others	15%
Entertainments, discos, etc.	10%
Go out with friends	10%

It is interesting to note (thinking back to my remarks about social dancing) that only 10% of the respondents felt they would like to enjoy more entertainments such as discos. However, it should be noted that the majority of this 10% were over the age of fourteen. This suggests that older adolescents do feel a need to participate in such activities. That sport was mentioned by 65% of the group came as no surprise. There are no athletic clubs in the area, apart from school based clubs, and tennis and badminton clubs often restrict membership to the over sixteens. Out of school sports clubs are thin on the ground and of course facilities in villages are virtually non-existent. There are one or two junior football clubs in the area, there could be many more, and female oriented sports organisations (hockey clubs for instance) are few and far between and almost certainly town based. From conversations with both teachers and pupils it is clear that many children simply 'pack in' playing sport once they leave school - this is very typical of course. As is the fact that much talent is lost for ever in the process. It is also interesting to note that of the 20% who wanted either more time with their friends or more entertainments, 70% lived in villages.

The reasons young people cannot participate in certain activities are predictable:

REASON WHY I CANNOT PARTICIPATE	Percentage of Sample
No facilities	43
No transport	24
Too expensive	21
No time	12

For those in villages more emphasis was placed on lack of transport rather than expense or time factors.

Q. 8. KNOWLEDGE OF ORGANISATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND LEADERS

Sample: 1024

A small (8%) but significant number of young people, particularly in villages, were unaware of local organisations offering some sort of service. Also, a good few youngsters, although having knowledge of a group, failed to identify the type of activity being offered and, apart from members, virtually none of the respondents knew the names of local leaders. In reply to the question: "Are there any youth organisations in your area?", the study group answered as follows:-

RESPONSE	Percentage of Sample
Yes	27
No	63
Don't know	10

Those who belonged to organisations had slightly more knowledge but the truth of the matter is that of the 63% who answered 'NO', 95% were in fact correct. As far as young people in villages are concerned, very little is on offer and clubs operating do so almost anonymously.

Q. 9. "WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING ..... WHAT KIND OF PLACE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO TO?"

ACTIVITY/ ORGANISATION	Percentage of sample	Majority age range
Sports	75%	Under 14's
Live music, dancing, etc.	36%	14+ group
Art/craft/drama	20%	No majority, all ages
Social coffee bar/ Youth club	20%	14+ group
Others (incl. judo, yoga, fencing)	30%	No majority, all ages

The replies to this question were fairly predictable and little else can be said. Again, the older children from villages boosted the numbers wishing to enjoy more live music and entertainments. Any organisation offering a variety of activities will attract young people.

Q. 10 & 11. (a) WOULD YOU USE A SPORTS COMPLEX IN BRIDPORT?

(b) WOULD YOU HAVE PROBLEMS GETTING INTO BRIDPORT?

(c) WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IF A MOBILE ART/DRAMA WORKSHOP VISITED YOUR AREA?

Sample: 1024

66% of the respondents said they would use a sports or activity complex if one was available in Bridport. Of these, 62% indicated that they would experience problems of actually getting into the town (obviously youngsters living in Bridport were discounted from this particular question). As far as the mobile art/drama workshop was concerned, 48% said they would definitely be attracted, most of these respondents were under fifteen and living in villages. The question was aimed primarily at village children anyway. The mobile unit is an attractive notion, not just from an art or drama point of view, and further considerations may be found in the next chapter.

SUMMARY

To sum up this chapter: what sort of story do all these statistics tell us? For a start, in the spring of 1978 information was sadly lacking. Publishing a directory of information rectified this deficiency and I could at last see the situation on the ground more clearly. In the towns there are plenty of organisations catering for younger adolescents and the schools are doing a tremendous amount of work all round. The L.E.A. has only two full-time centres in the area and no detached worker. Their commitment needs boosting. Generally speaking about 50% of young people in the area are members of one organisation or another and of these about 65% attend fairly regularly, possibly once a week. There is a clear need for 'open' youth work in the villages and here the L.E.A. should be taking more initiatives. Overall the picture is not too bad, particularly for those youngsters living in one of the three main towns. Although small, these towns do much for their young people. In the villages the picture is different, particularly for the older adolescents, for younger children, up to (say) the age of fourteen, many of their needs are being met, but at a cost (in terms of travelling and time). Just over half the respondents living in villages said they were members of some sort of organisation. This still leaves a substantial number of children unprovided for in terms of out of school activities. The work of both the Dorset Association of Youth Clubs and the Area Youth Committee needs consolidating and some decentralization from Dorchester will have to be considered to make long term initiatives effective. A fuller discussion regarding recommendations follows in the next chapter. In the summer young people are less likely to be at a loss for something to do, but in the winter the situation is at times desperate for many older adolescents. The feelings of depression and a sense of isolation can be seen quite clearly on the faces of many children, and adults too for that matter. Lonely people, with nowhere to go and nothing to do, living in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, but to many it is nothing more than a social desert.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that most of the youth work in West Dorset happens in and around the three main towns, particularly Bridport, the following recommendations are made with the aim of boosting provision in the villages. I see this as being a priority for the 1980's. Also, I talk about developing the Youth Service for a reason, and that reason is to bring about the achievement of a series of well considered aims and objectives. The aims and objectives of the Dorset Youth Service are outlined in a report made by the Permanent Youth Service Review Panel (September 1980) and entitled "Youth Service in Dorset in the 80's".

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DORSET YOUTH SERVICE

AIM To provide a framework of Social and Political Education within which young people irrespective of differences of education or ability will be encouraged to discover and develop their personal resources of body, mind and spirit in association with each other and in the company of mature adults in order that they may achieve an adequate and balanced progression through childhood to adult citizenship, and thereafter participate fully in an active and challenging society.

SOCIAL EDUCATION is viewed as the vital third dimension of experience beyond the home and family and school/work which provides young people with opportunities through which they may learn to enjoy:-

- taking responsibility and interest in small or large community groups
- participating actively in a democratic system
- showing compassion for their fellows
- widening their experience and range of interests through a variety of formal or informal leisure pursuits
- practising the exercise of authority
- learning the art of establishing and managing personal relationships
- appreciating the need for personal integrity and sense of responsibility in a Society which affords the maximum freedom to the individual
- making the most of their talents and coming to terms with their limitations

POLITICAL EDUCATION is the process whereby we enable young people to understand and to participate in decision making processes which affect their lives and whereby we provide opportunities to help them learn the skills employed in making choices and in enhancing the life of the Community as a whole.

OBJECTIVES

(a) In consultation with young people to provide, through statutory and voluntary agencies, opportunities for social and political education and for cultural and physical development which will meet the needs of as many young people as possible and to provide information about the opportunities offered.

(b) To establish and support a variety of provisions generally for the age range 12 - 21, with appropriately trained staff as necessary.

(c) To support and encourage voluntary youth organisations.

(d) To persuade adults associated with young people of the need for continuing training to improve the quality of their work and to ensure that such training is available.

NOTE

With the great variety of organisations, especially in the voluntary sector, it can be assumed that the general aims outlined above are accepted, but that there will be a marked difference of emphasis as follows:-

(a) the development of spiritual awareness (in Church Clubs and Church based Uniformed Organisations)

(b) the acquisition of specialised skills (pony riding, Judo, boxing, First Aid)

(c) introduction to adult societies (pre service units, young political parties)

Broadly speaking, these aims and objectives are designed to help young people express their adolescence in a meaningful and public way. In many parts of Dorset this is most certainly happening and the aims and objectives are being achieved admirably. 'Pound for pound' the Dorset Youth Service is, in my opinion, one of the best of its kind in the country. It is a YOUTH service; it is a CARING service; it is a WELL ORGANISED service; it is a SMALL (almost FAMILY) service and this helps its efficiency; but it is not perfect. In the report mentioned above various proposals and recommendations are put forward. As well as various training recommendations, developments for the 80's are proposed for South Dorset (Weymouth), North Dorset and Wimborne, Poole and Purbeck, Dorchester and Bournemouth and Christchurch. These proposals involve new building programmes and the employment of centre based Wardens, neighbourhood community workers and detached youth workers. As far as the area west of Bridport is concerned (the study area) there are NO proposals, indeed as far as rural youth work as a whole is concerned the report merely states (as a RECOMMENDATION) that "in some cases (which cases?) Area Youth Workers are needed and in others SMALL building projects and part-time leaders would help". True many full-time centres are expected to cater for young people in outlying rural districts. In my opinion this is leaving too much to chance and definite strategies for rural youth specifically need working out. There can be no doubt that if the general aims and objectives of the Dorset Youth Service were being achieved in the far west of the county, the feelings of social alienation experienced by many youngsters would be reduced, they would not disappear, (there are too many other factors involved) but the situation would be helped. In West Dorset 'open' youth work and work with the sixteen plus group is weak, the three towns excepted. If implemented, the following recommendations would go a fair way towards rectifying the situation.

I have broken down the recommendations into three broad areas: FACE WORK, GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS and ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.

1. FACE WORK

Two recommendations are made: (i) the appointment of a full-time 'detached' rural youth worker, and (ii) positive action regarding the recruitment and training of part-time workers.

(i) The Role of a 'Detached' Rural Youth Worker

As I toured various villages, it became apparent that a good many youngsters and adults were simply not aware of the existence of a Dorset County Youth Service. Also, part-time leaders gave me the impression of being very much 'out on a limb', struggling by themselves to maintain an already restricted service. The need for a detached field worker to help combat some of these problems should be the number one Youth Service priority for the West Dorset area. His working brief would need to be broad, though well framed. Leslie Silverlock (Rapport 1977) in an article entitled "Detached Work in a Rural Situation" considers some of the problems and breaks field work down into three broad areas:

(a) Personal contact with young people in the community.

(b) Organisational work, arising from needs discovered.

(c) Political activity, that is trying to influence changes that will effectively improve the opportunities open to young people in any particular area.

Personal contact is vitally important, and as far as West Dorset is concerned it should not be too difficult to locate pockets of young people walking around villages, according to interviews and observations they would appear to do little else. I myself on countless occasions have come upon small groups of adolescents hanging around village squares or ambling along the roads. Other points of contact, the village pub for instance, would soon be identified as would a number of 'key' personnel, the local primary school headmaster for example. Silverlock explains: "Working with young people in commercial premises (the village pub) where someone else is responsible for administration, organisation and the building enables the detached worker to concentrate on building personal relationships, a situation which some centre based workers with their responsibility for subscriptions, equipment, keys and premises might well envy ..... Once the worker is known in a rural situation the detached work processes become easier ...... he will be approached as a person recognised for his skill or initiative in certain areas ...... the worker is asked to sit on committees, help with local events and a host of other things. These aspects are an essential part of image building ... ... for a worker is going to want a large return from community resources to meet the needs of young people .....".

Having contacted adolescents and other key personnel certain needs are identified from which organisational work develops, Silverlock highlights the case of volunteer motorcycle training for young people. Other area activities as well as specific events for individual groups soon become a part of the detached worker's organisational programme. It is a question of organising activities which will offer young people more opportunity to participate, learn and socialize with their peers in a meaningful and caring way: "The worker has to be prepared to look for any feature of local life that may be of direct benefit for young people, or an investment for the future. This may range from meeting someone in a pub willing to take young people surfing, helping to organise a dance at a village hall, suggesting a ladies rugby match or finding tutors for a literacy scheme. In doing so the detached worker is unlikely to be purely a youth worker. Unfettered by statutory obligations he can find himself in a position of link man in the caring services, able to bring together a variety of professionals to work together on a common problem, such as unemployment, a training scheme or even a political lobby."

In West Dorset a detached youth worker could have provided temporary leadership or support for the incumbent leaders at (say) Drimpton Youth Club, or Netherbury or Litton Cheney or over at Bettiscombe with Mr.Forsey. Also there were a number of ideas for events which never materialised because of the lack of leadership, particularly when it came to organisation. Village discos, art workshops, drama sessions, fund raising schemes for equipment which young people needed urgently - remember 'Mr.Kitson's football'. Of course, one detached worker would be unable to be all things to all men, but working regularly in the field would allow him to contact other interested persons prepared to help. The detached worker might also be able to help out young people with severe transport problems, particularly if he was supplied with an area mini-bus, but in any event as a County Council employee he would have knowledge of and access to such vehicles based on school sites or at youth centres or even garaged at County Hall. Above all else, the detached worker could act as a major representative for young people in West Dorset. He could lobby local councillors, see employers, work with the police and generally set the publicity wheels in motion. By generating activity the detached worker would create more interest generally and this would help significantly the implementation of the second recommendation regarding increased face work, namely:

(ii) The Recruitment and Training of Part-Time Helpers

Whether a detached worker is appointed or not, the recruitment of would-be helpers and support for serving personnel are vital issues when it comes to developing youth service provision. Without the help of a face worker in the field these problems would be difficult to overcome, but in West Dorset some of the tasks could be carried out by the two full-time professionals based at Bridport and Beaminster working through the County Training Officer in Dorchester and to a certain extent the local Area Youth Committee. Notices and information leaflets need distributing around the villages, items of local interest regarding youth activities need pushing through the press, special 'open' days or evenings aimed at recruiting helpers need initiating and training schemes designed specifically for rural workers need developing. The problems should be tackled immediately and although the L.E.A. is in a good position to take a lead, co-operation with the Dorset Association of Youth Clubs and the Dorset Community Council would clearly pay dividends. However, whatever strategies are employed the overall recommendation here is that a significant growth in face to face contact with young people, particularly those living in villages, should be the main aim over the next five years.

2. GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

From my research it soon became clear that general communications (regarding youth work specifically) in the area are far from satisfactory. If increased face work is going to be effective communication systems will need to become more efficient. To a certain extent an increase in the level of face work will bring about this situation naturally, but other initiatives could be taken now. For a start, information regarding groups and individuals with interests in youth must be kept up to date. The directory of information published in 1978 needs to be amended or added to or checked regularly, really this work should be on-going with scraps of information being added daily.

Secondly, to become more aware of what is happening at grass roots level and to give themselves more local contacts, professional workers (L.E.A., D.A.Y.C. and the Dorset Community Council) need to search out and brief 'key' personnel residing in both town and village. This idea is one advocated by John Craske for the Somerset Youth Service. A 'key' person may be either someone extremely active in youth work or someone who is simply prepared to stick a poster in the window of his house. The local publican might make a good 'key' man or often a local postman or policeman. A key person is someone who may be relied on to pass on information and possess good local knowledge which he is prepared to share.

Thirdly, general publicity and information needs distributing regularly throughout the area. This can be done via personal letters (to and from professional and voluntary workers in the field), newsletters put out by the Area Youth Office or field workers in Bridport and Beaminster, the publication of a magazine (possibly bi-monthly) concerning youth and youth activities in West Dorset and more use of the local press. Of course the television authorities are always prepared to consider publicising local events and word of mouth is often highly reliable, but without a full-time detached worker, or more part-time volunteers, tends to be variable in effectiveness.

Fourthly, and perhaps most important of all regarding general communications and overall youth service development, a TEAM approach must be encouraged. The two professional workers in Bridport and Beaminster need to get together with representatives from the D.A.Y.C., Dorset Community Council, the local police, the social services, probation services and health services, the careers service, the statutory education service and local politicians (County Councillors, Parish Councillors, etc.). A common approach to the problems facing young people in rural areas needs 'hammering' out. From this, the framework of an effective communications system will develop.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Here I am talking about decentralization. A common complaint amongst field workers in West Dorset is that they often feel isolated from the administrative 'hub' in Dorchester, as one local part-time leader put it, "that fifteen miles (between Bridport and Dorchester) is the biggest problem we got in Bridport". Also, the Area Youth Committee is often seen as a 'toothless' mysterious policy making group. This situation could be changed for the better by (i) basing an Area Youth Office in the far West. This need not be operational full-time. One of the two Area Youth Officers operating from Dorchester might be persuaded to operate from such an office based in the West (say) one half day a week and also, possibly, the two full-time professionals already working in the area. If a detached worker were available he would be able to man an office for a short period of time and possibly one or two volunteer personnel could be found for other periods. It would not be impossible for an Area office to be set up in Bridport or Beaminster (possibly even Lyme Regis or a village) and this would benefit considerably small youth organisations struggling for support locally. Communications would become more effective, personal contacts developed, administrative support strengthened and such an office could also become a local resource centre, holding such items as camping equipment or sports gear or just general information. It would become a local Youth Advisory Bureau, indeed work with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Bridport should be encouraged.

(ii) The Area Youth Committee needs to be reformed and renamed. At the moment, as outlined earlier, one committee serves the whole of West Dorset. This body should remain but under a new name: the"West Dorset Association of Rural Youth Clubs", the emphasis being on RURAL. From this group sub-committees serving the three rural districts (Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis) need to be formed. By doing this more activity would be generated locally, travelling to and from meetings would be eased, particularly for those people living in the 'sticks', and more debates concerning the problems of rural youth would be entered into. Also, with four active committees in the area (rather than one) more of a political lobby would be formed. Meetings need to be regular and reports should be sent frequently to the County Youth Officer. Planning for the future should be the main task of the broader Association of Rural Youth Clubs. Targets should be set, area events arranged, training programmes encouraged, fund raising activities initiated and general policy statements issued to the press regularly. This is the way forward as far as the Area Youth Committee is concerned. The committee needs to scatter and regroup as small units throughout the whole of West Dorset. It must get on the inside of the rural youth scene.

Other strategies aimed at developing youth work in West Dorset could involve:

The Mobile Service: Judging from answers to certain questions in the questionnaires a good number of youngsters, particularly in the villages, would use a mobile art or drama 'workshop' if provided. Also the idea of a mobile coffee bar might prove beneficial. The mobile service could take information into villages and in co-operation with the Dorset Community Council (which already has a mobile 'Blue Van' service) and the D.A.Y.C. might very well improve communications and help out with organisational problems.

Re-definement of Existing Roles: in particular the roles of the two professionals in Bridport and Beaminster. Area responsibilities (particularly face work) could be written into their job descriptions, although this would probably mean releasing them from their centre based duties for perhaps four sessions a week. This would mean recruiting additional part-time helpers and generally speaking this sort of arrangement is the least satisfactory of the recommendations. It is, however, a possibility worth looking into.

The Inter-County Worker: The Devon, Dorset and Somerset borders meet round about the Lyme Regis area, the Somerset border is slightly more to the north. Would it be possible for the three counties (or maybe just Devon and Dorset) to get together and appoint a Border Youth Worker. This might well be an interesting experiment, possibly fraught with administrative problems, but the move might be advantageous to the counties involved. A job description and channels of communication and responsibility would need working out in detail, but in times of financial cut-backs the return in terms of youth work for only a third of any total expenditure may prove an attractive proposition. This solution is not ideal, but in an area devoid of field workers is perhaps better than nothing.

For the Towns: a neighbourhood youth worker dealing with specific problems, such as unemployment, and making contact with young people 'at risk' (un-clubables, petty criminals, children from deprived homes, etc.) particularly those over the age of sixteen, would be something of a bonus for Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis. One worker could probably cover all three towns, not easily, but adequately.

To briefly summarise:

To offer young people in West Dorset a more meaningful youth service positive action needs to be taken. I have put forward various recommendations, regarding more personal contact with adolescents, FACE WORK; an improvement in GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS (particularly the idea of an inter agency team approach); and the decentralization of current ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT systems. These recommendations are aimed at increasing the amount of youth work activity in the villages especially. It must be added that what I am saying is nothing new to Dorset. The single most important recommendation, the appointment of a full-time detached youth worker, has already been proved successful in rural North Dorset, around the Yetminster area. The authorities must know that this approach in the hands of an experienced worker does reap rewards. It is hoped that they adopt a similar strategy for the far West of Dorset. Failing this, any strategy is probably better than the nothing proposed in the Review Panel's 1980 report.

CONCLUSION

So there we have it; the far West of Dorset, an area of extreme natural beauty relying heavily on tourism to boost its economy. Like many other places in Britain the early 1980's have brought to the area both economic and social depression. Today, even in Bridport, the unemployed may be seen queuing outside the local employment office and both large and small firms are hard pressed to make out financially. About fifty youngsters are registered unemployed with the Careers Service sub-office in Bridport. In West Dorset terms this "is, a disaster". With regards to the adolescents, I have drawn attention to those who even in times of economic growth feel socially alienated from the communities in which they live. In time, as history has shown, they will integrate reasonably well into the social systems which at the moment exclude them, but their adolescence will be a mere shadow of a silent experience. A development of the Youth Service, both statutory and voluntary, is necessary to bring about social and political changes which will benefit rural youth in the years to come. However, by itself the Youth Service can do little. The whole rural problem, not just for West Dorset, but for the U.K. in general, needs looking into: local housing policies, re-allocation of rate support grants, special rural transport systems, the regeneration of important services to outlying districts, rural co-operative employment schemes, aid for self-help projects and many other development programmes. Both the Association of District Councils and the Rural Community Council are making great effort to give the rural debate a political platform. In their "Rural Recovery: strategy for survival (1978)" the Association of District Councils state: "The Association attaches great importance to the need to arrest the progressive and continuing decline of the rural areas in England and Wales. De-population and deprivation stem from the deep-seated and economic and social problems facing rural communities, and the Association believes that what is now needed is a comprehensive and co-ordinated programme of action on the part of both central and local government and the various agencies concerned with rural revitalization, in the following fields:

(a) relief of unemployment and creation of employment opportunities for small scale factory developments and promotion of tourism;

(b) provision of new housing and rehabilitation of existing rural housing;

(c) improvement of public transport;

(d) development of infra-structure, including water and sewage schemes;

(e) provision of adequate local community facilities.

The approach to rural problems must take account of the inescapable economic and social forces which over a period of many years have contributed to the drift of people from the country to the towns... The population and social balance has been seriously upset with a drop in the younger age groups and an increase in the elderly." And in "The Decline of Rural Services (1978)" the Standing Conference of Rural Community Councils observe: "There is concern for those living in rural areas who cannot adapt easily to declining services: those with no public transport available or who cannot afford the cost of regular journeys, and without private transport - the elderly, wives left at home. They may be in the minority but their disadvantage is no less a cause of concern and attention. This of course does not take account of those who have moved away from rural areas because of the decline of rural services, and those who are discouraged from moving in for the same reason. The availability of rural services has considerable implications for the future structure of rural society." All this applies to West Dorset, and to youth in particular.

Compared to urban living rural life has both advantages and disadvantages. For example, in Wigan in 1979 over one thousand young people were taking part in the Government's Youth Opportunities Programme, many more had no work at all. Today the situation is getting worse. Unemployment is rising, opportunities decreasing and young people, and older people for that matter, are becoming depressed and desperate people living in depressed and desperate inner city or decaying town areas. A strange, almost self-destructive recipe for disaster has been mixed years ago and today we are witnessing the results. These are the worst aspects of urban life. At its best, urban living can present the adolescent with many choices and a variety of wonderful experiences, this is why people in the past have moved out of the rural areas. However, in times of depression, there is some evidence to suggest that outward migration from rural areas slows down, indeed in some areas it would appear that the population is increasing. Urban - Rural; at both their best and worst the two extremes will always be completely different, and let us remember that there are 'horses for courses'. Some people are born to live in the truly rural setting, others for the city ghetto. People are equipped to cope with a certain way of life and find it extremely difficult to adjust to change. The people of West Dorset, those with a truly rural attitude and outlook, have learned to live without many of the services certain persons are now pushing to introduce or improve on, including myself and the development of the Youth Service. More research is needed, but from my observations it seems to me that young people in rural areas are not, generally speaking, getting a 'fair crack of the whip' and that certain developments would be greatly appreciated. I would, however, contend that the problems of rural youngsters are not as great as those of many urban adolescents, not in 1981 anyway. Nevertheless, rural life does have its drawbacks and these must be faced and defeated. The quality of rural life must not be allowed to weaken any further and there is some evidence to suggest that for some areas rural recovery has begun. Anne Glyn Jones (1979) in a book "Rural Recovery - has it begun" highlights the Devon Parish of Hatherleigh and claims that there are clear signs of an improving situation. Well that may be so for Hatherleigh, but what about those villages a few miles away, and what about Wootton Fitzpaine or Stoke Abbot or Marshwood or 'Haughton'? Rural recovery, whatever that may mean, has not begun for these places. Why not? Just how much damage to the rural system is being done by the 'Key Settlement' idea? Should all out attention be focused on one area or parish at the expense of may be three or four others? What is the long term logic behind this thinking? Why is it that, in the words of one prominent citizen, "Bridport is a place to come back to, not to stay and make your 'fortune' in." Well young people in West Dorset are not into making fortunes, but they are having to move away to make a life for themselves, even in times (perhaps more so) of economic growth. Where do we go from here? The problems of rural youth were being assessed by the National Association of Youth Club's CRY (Campaign for Rural Youth). This effort seems to have died the inevitable death. It needs to be resurrected. Social research will help, particularly comparative research. The problems of rural youth in West Dorset need an international setting to become politically forceful. All those organisations and individuals concerned with rural youth, and rural life in general for that matter, must get together and plan a strategy for the twenty first century. More effort is needed in flying the rural youth flag, but it must be done, otherwise the young people in our villages will remain the forgotten minority they are at the moment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN THE BRIDPORT, BEAMINSTER AND LYME REGIS AREAS

BRIDPORT AREA

BURT, BOULTON LTD., St.Andrews Road, Bridport.

P. COTTINGTON ASSOCIATES, Downe Street, Bridport.

BARRETT & SPARKS, St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

W. E. ACREMAN, Bridport.

H. G. BARTLETT LTD., West Allington Works, Bridport.

BEAUTY BLINDS LTD., St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

BRADFORD & SON, Sea Road, Bridport.

BRIDFISH LTD., Old Laundry, Longs Lane, Bridport.

BRIDPORT GUNDRY LTD., Court Works, West Street, Bridport.

BRIT ENGINEERING LTD., 202, St.Andrews Road, Bridport.

CRINTON POTTERIES LTD., St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

DUNCAON TUCKER LTD., (SOLENT FURNITURE), Pymore, Bridport.

FOUNTAIN VIOLET POTTERIES, St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

HINE & SON, East Street, Bridport.

MOORES LTD., Morcombelake, Bridport.

NEWBRIDGE BOATS, Church Mill Lane, Bridport.

S. J. NORMAN, Bradpole, Bridport.

OXENBURYS LTD., St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

J.C. & R.H. PALMER, Old Brewery, Bridport.

REDPORT NET CO., East Street, Bridport.

SHELL ISLANDERS, St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

TERRENCAST (PAR ACOUSTICS), St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

WESTBROOK MARINE, St.Michaels Trading Estate, Bridport.

WESSEX INDUSTRIAL SCREEN PRINT CO., St.Michaels Trading Estate,
Bridport.

APPENDIX A (contd.)

W. HANN, Foundry Lane, Bridport.

KNOWLE NETS, 20, East Road, Bridport.

F. G. PARKER, 20, East Road, Bridport.

W. WHITE, New Zealand, Church Street, Bridport.

G. HEAVER, Longs Lane, Bridport.

REECVIL BUILDERS, West Bay Road, Bridport.

A. J. POTTER, Dentist, East Street, Bridport.

BRIDPORT GOLF CLUB, West Bay, Bridport.

BULL HOTEL, East Street, Bridport.

SAXON CATERING, East Street, Bridport.

F. W. WOOLWORTH, East Street, Bridport.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, South Street, Bridport.

BOOTS LTD., East Street, Bridport.

NORTHOVER & GILBERT, East Street, Bridport.

ELMES, East Street, Bridport.

FINE FARE, Bridport.

POST OFFICE, West Street, Bridport.

S.W.E.B., South Street, Bridport/Lyme Regis.

S.G.B., 2, West Street, Bridport.

BEAMINSTER AND LYME REGIS AREA

ABBOTT BROWN, Beaminster.

F. BUGLERS, Beaminster.

LONGLEYS, 7, Church Street, Beaminster.

LYME BAY MARINE, Lyme Regis.

LYME REGIS ENGINEERING CO., Lyme Regis.

J. MAKEPEACE, Parnham House, Beaminster.

APPENDIX A (contd.)

NUMATIC INTERNATIONAL, Beaminster.

UNIGATE CREAMERIES, Beaminster.

LYME REGIS PRINTING CO., Lyme Regis.

E. BAILEY, Builders, Beaminster.

R. G. SPILLER, Fleet Street, Beaminster.

APPENDIX B

CHART TO SHOW INCIDENCE OF DEPOPULATION IN VILLAGES IN WEST DORSET

PARISHES OF BRIDPORT	1851 pop.	1851 area (acres)	1901 pop.	1961 pop.	1971 pop.	1971 area (acres)	1851 persons (acre)	1971 person (acre)
Allington	1,748	594	1,431	249	208	785	2.94	0.26
Askerswell	224	1,161	179	137	134	724	0.19	0.08
Bothenhampton	548	823	424	943	1,313	958	0.67	1.37
Bradpole	1,391	1,007	1,723	1,230	1,405	798	1.38	1.76
Burton Bradstock	1,181	2,680	715	602	804	719	0.44	0.30
Catherstone/Leweston	32	245	38	31	58	245	0.13	0.24
Charmouth	664	445	560	890	1,017	440	1.49	2.31
Chideock	884	1,978	551	559	555	1,976	0.45	0.28
Chilcombe	-	-	-	14	21	449		0.05
Litton Cheney	507	3,817	381	216	190	2,027	0.13	0.09
Loders	986	2,241	741	414	394	2,277	0.44	0.17
Puncknowle	467	1,974	335	269	394	2,341	0.24	0.17
Shipton Gorge	408	1,528	237	210	269	1,462	0.27	0.18
Stanton St. Gabriel	90	1,070	57	92	79	1,035	0.08	0.08
Swyre	254	1,129	148	91	70	1,129	0.22	0.06
Symondsbury	1,395	3,925	950	918	917	3,777	0.36	0.24
Wootton Fitzpaine	361	1,679	154	308	280	3,571	0.22	0.08
Whitchurch Canicorum	1,532	6,113	868	641	667	4,268	0.25	0.16

APPENDIX B (contd.)

PARISHES OF BEAMINSTER	1851 pop.	1851 area (acres)	1901 pop.	1961 pop.	1971 pop.	1971 area (acres)	1851 persons (acre)	1971 persons (acre)
Beaminster	2,832	5,190	1,702	2,000	2,346	5,187	0.54	0.45
Bettiscombe	73	667	50	78	77	649	0.11	0.12
Broadwindsor	1,516	6,303	994	993	1,021	7,125	0.24	0.14
Burstock	234	931	134	96	102	931	0.25	0.10
Chedington	189	785	123	97	97	785	0.24	0.11
Evershot	606	1,409	353	258	217	1,568	0.43	0.14
Halstock	-	-	-	339	334	-	-	-
Hooke	261	1,237	155	119	129	1,254	0.21	0.10
Mapperton	85	820	76	21	31	821	0.10	0.04
Marshwood	520	3,396	271	340	303	3,745	0.15	0.08
Melbury Osmond	-	-	-	251	185	-	-	-
Mosterton	346	975	207	177	219	976	0.35	0.22
Melbury Samford	55	1,040	85	50	42	1,041	0.05	0.04
Netherbury	2,066	6,274	1,253	1,072	997	6,274	0.33	0.15
North Poorton	109	664	42	22	26	684	0.16	0.04
Pilsdon	95	660	54	44	52	659	0.14	0.08
Powerstock	1,044	4,078	631	440	377	4,144	0.26	0.09
Rampisham	412	2,095	191	151	152	2,095	0.20	0.07
Seaborough	-	-	-	52	63	-	-	-
South Perrott	374	1,488	242	155	167	1,420	0.25	0.12
Stoke Abbott	826	2,327	419	355	211	2,324	0.35	0.09
Thorncombe	1,317	4,896	785	697	654	5,627	0.27	0.12
West Chelborough	-	-	-	69	59	968	-	0.65

Sources:	1851 pop. and area and 1901 pop.	-	Victoria History of Dorset
	1961 pop. and area		Census figures

APPENDIX C

POPULATION DECLINE 1961 - 1971

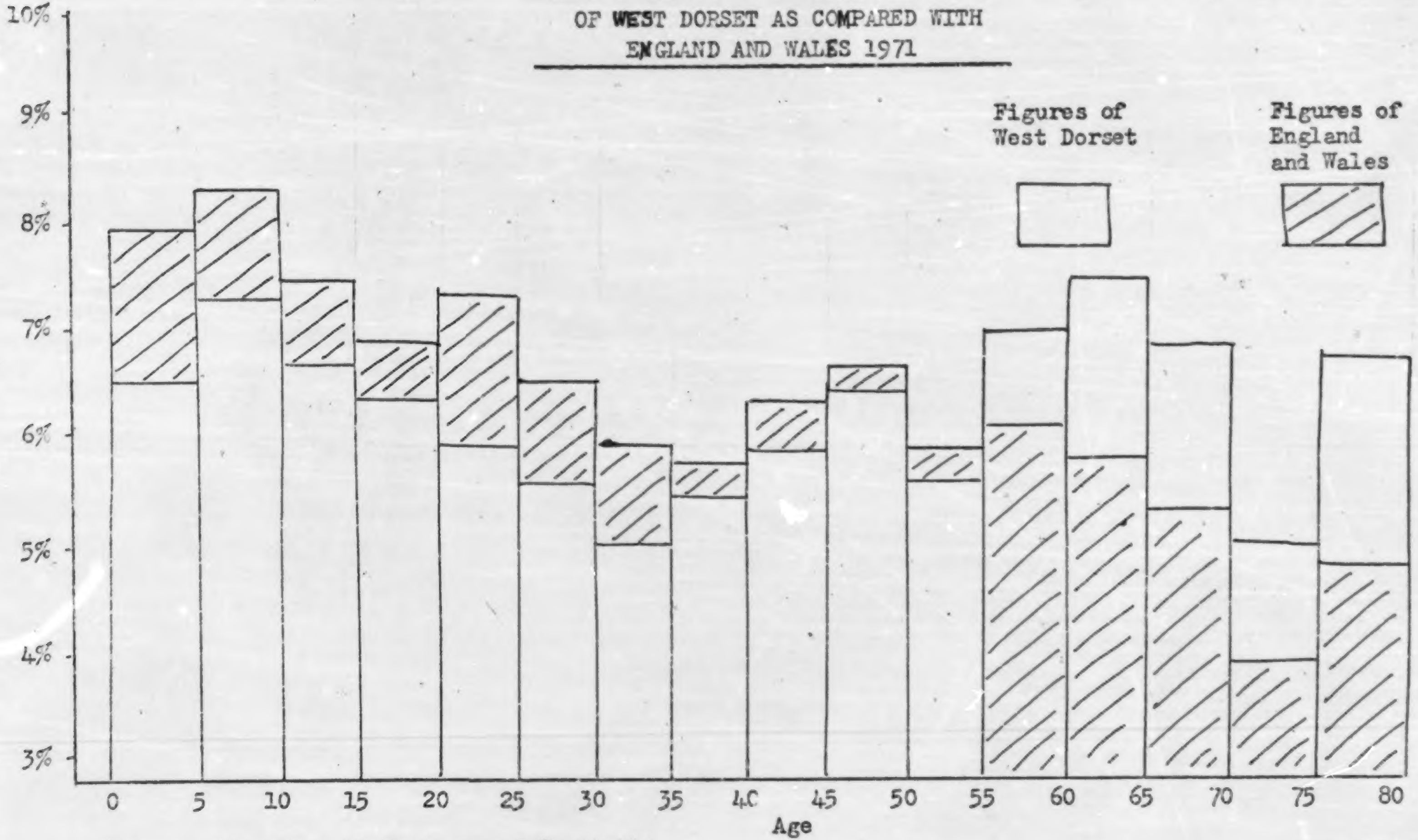
(MAIN INCIDENCE)

RATE OF DECLINE:

Under 5%	Askerswell
	Bettiscombe
	Loders
5 - 10%	Netherbury
	Thorncombe
	Wootton Fitzpaine
10 - 15%	Litton Cheney
	Marshwood
	Powerstock
	Stanton St. Gabriel
	West Chelborough
15 - 20%	Allington
	Evershot
	Melbury Sampford
20 - 25%	Swyre
25 - 30%	Melbury Osmond
40% +	Stoke Abbott

APPENDIX D

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL POPULATION OF WEST DORSET AS COMPARED WITH ENGLAND AND WALES 1971



Source: Dorset - An Abstract of Statistics

APPENDIX E

DIRECTORY OF INFORMATION (INDEX ONLY)

(original directory page numbers)

Page 1	Archery
	Arts Societies
	American Square Dancing
	Askerswell Village Hall
	Athletics
Page 2	Archaeology
	Angling
	Badminton
	Baggator
Page 3	Ballet
	Basketball
	Beaminster Army Cadets
Page 4	Beaminster Bowmen
	Beaminster Camera Club
	1st Beaminster Guides
Page 5	1st Beaminster Scouts
	Beaminster Swimming Club
	Blackdown Village Hall
	Boxing
Page 6	1st Bradpole Guides
	Bradpole Village Hall
	Bradpole Youth Club
Page 7	Bride Valley Badminton Club
	Bridport and West Dorset Rambling Club
	Bridport Arts Centre
	Bridport Arts Society
Page 8	Bridport Arts Society Workshop
	Bridport Dog Training Society
	Bridport Eighteen Plus Group
Page 9	Bridport Girls Brigade
	1st Bridport Girl Guides
	Bridport Girls Venture Corps
Page 10	Bridport Jazz Club
Page 11	Bridport Judo Club
	Bridport Model Railway Club
	Bridport Sea Cadet Corps

Page 12	1st Bridport Scouts 1st Bride Valley Scouts Bridport Sea Scouts Bridport Sea Scout Hall
Page 13	Bridport Swimming Club Bridport Town Hall Bridport United Fellowship Group
Page 14	Bridport United Church Youth Orchestra Bridport Youth Centre
Page 15	Broadwindsor Comrades Hall Burton Bradstock W.I. Hall Burton Bradstock Badminton Club Burton Bradstock Junior Badminton Club
Page 16	Burton District Youth Football Club Bridport Film Society
Page 17	Boy Scouts - District Officers Beaminster Social Club Beehive Club (under 8 years) Beaminster Arts Society Bridport Rugby Club
Page 18	Bridport Tennis Club Bird Watching Brownies (List of Brownie Packs throughout the Area) Beaminster Badminton Club
Page 19	Camping Canoeing Camping Equipment Careers Service Caving
Page 20	Charmouth Badminton Club Charmouth Church Hall 1st Charmouth Girl Guides Charmouth Youth Club
Page 21	Charmouth Youth Club Hall Charmouth W.I. Hall Chideock Badminton Club Charmouth Lawn Tennis Club Chideock Village Hall
Page 22	Church House - Bridport Citizens' Advice Bureau - Bridport Colfox School Hall Corscombe Village Hall Cycling
Page 23	Cubs (Scout Cub-Packs throughout the Area)

Page 24	Cricket Dancing Dorset Association of Youth Clubs
Page 25	Drama (A list of local drama clubs) Drimpton Village Hall Drimpton Youth Centre
Page 26	Dorset Bird Club Evershot Drama Club Family Planning Fencing Films
Page 27	Folk Dancing Folk Dancing and Song Society Football Youth Football Clubs Festival Players Festival Orchestra
Page 28	Girl Guide Association (West Division) Guide Companies - throughout the Area Gliding Golf Gymnastics
Page 29	Golden Hind - Venture Corps Handball Halls - Village Halls throughout the Area Halls - Town Halls and others throughout the Area Hockey
Page 30	Judo Keep Fit Korfball Lacrosse Loders Village Hall Loders Youth Club
Page 31	Lyme Regis Adventure Corps Lyme Regis Army Cadets Lyme Regis Boys Club
Page 32	1st Lyme Regis Girl Guides Lyme Regis and District Youth Council
Page 33	Lyme Regis Parish Church Choir and Camping Club Lyme Regis Theatre 1st Lyme Regis Sea Scouts Lyme Regis Chess Club Lyme Regis Art Group Lyme Regis Football Club Lyme Regis Sea Angling Club

Page 34	Margaret Morris Music and Movement Society Marshwood Vale Young Farmers Club Martial Arts Commission Medau Society of Great Britain & Northern Ireland Melbury Osmond Village Hall Melbury Osmond Tennis Club
Page 35	Melbury Osmond Football Club Melbury Osmond Badminton Club Melbury Osmond Youth Club Melplash Village Hall Modern Pentathlon
Page 36	Mosterton Village Hall Mountaineering Netball Netherbury Village Hall
Page 37	Netherbury Judo Club Orienteering Operatic Societies Parachuting Powerstock Youth Club
Page 38	Power Boats Rugby Rambling Rampisham and Wraxhall Village Hall Referees (Football Association)
Page 39	Riding Riding Stables Rowing Royal Observer Corps (Bridport)
Page 40	Sailing Ocean Youth Club Sea Scouts Shipton Gorge Parish Hall Shooting
Page 41	Skating Ski-ing Softball Sports Council Squash Star Squares (American Dancing Club)
Page 42	Stoke Abbot Church Hall Swimming 1st Symondsbury Girl Guides
Page 43	1st Symondsbury Scouts Symondsbury Youth Football Club St.John's Ambulance Cadets Stamps (Bridport Stamp Club)

Page 44 Tennis
Tennis Courts
Tennis Clubs
Thorncombe - St.Mary's Parish Church

Page 45/46 Thorncombe Village Hall
Trampolining
Table Tennis - Bridport League - List of Teams

Page 47 West Bay Angling Club
West Dorset Hockey Club
West Dorset Scout Band

Page 48 Whitchurch Canonicorum Village Hall
West Country Embroiderers
Woodmean Halls, Lyme Regis
Woodroffe Badminton Club

Page 49 Word and Action (Theatre Company)
Younger Generation Club
Yoga
Youth Clubs/Centres
Local Youth Clubs

APPENDIX F. BREAKDOWN OF SCHOOL LEAVERS FROM WEST DORSET SCHOOLS, 1979-80.

Schools	No. reaching S/L age	No. remaining at school	No. FE/HE	Entering into:										Left area	At home	Deceased	Not known	Y.O.P.		Still registered
				Farming	Building	Engineering	Clerical	Retail	Catering	Herding	Factory	Forces	Other					W.E.E.P.	C.S.A.	
Colfox 5th	139	55	16	8	9	6	2	10	11	1	6	4	5	2	1	-	-	-	3	-
" 6th	96	36	27	4	-	-	6	4	-	-	-	6	5	6	-	-	1	1	-	-
Woodroffe 5th	150	79	13	6	10	3	-	3	3	-	1	5	5	14	1	1	4	1	1	-
" 6th	127	56	24	4	1	1	8	2	-	-	1	3	5	6	3	-	12	1	-	-
Beaminster 5th	138	41	23	11	8	8	1	3	4	-	6	4	5	8	1	-	5	6	2	2
" 6th	63	22	17	1	-	-	7	4	1	-	-	1	1	5	1	-	-	1	2	-
Total	713	289	120	34	28	18	24	26	19	1	14	23	26	41	7	1	22	10	8	2

Source: Weymouth Careers Office

APPENDIX F (contd.)

These figures show the number of school leavers absorbed into the system since 1979. In the first year out of school 10% left the area, not including the 'UNKNOWNS' or those joining the forces. If we include these two groups (or only a few of the 'UNKNOWNS') the number jumps to around 20%. How many more will leave the second year out of school or the third year? How many of those in Further or Higher Education will continue to live in the area once their training has finished? Of those young people in full-time employment, how many can say they have a career or security for life? In the past, because the numbers are relatively small, the area has been able to absorb those youngsters who stayed; but the situation is changing. The Weymouth Careers Office told me that the prospects for school leavers are worse than ever, even firms who could be relied on to provide at least one job (if only for the summer) can no longer do so. Factories in Bridport have been closed, so too have shops and offices. It is worse now for young people than it has ever been before. It is hoped that some of the small communities referred to in this thesis support their unemployed adolescents more than they have supported others in the past.